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FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

DICK, THE BOY LAWYER;
OR, WINNING A BIG FEE. *By A SELF-MADE MAN.*



Lifting up the chair, he threw it with terrific force straight at the faces of the two masked men. With a cry of rage the men leaped back, as the chair flew through the doorway. Dick was desperate.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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Dick, the Boy Lawyer

OR,

WINNING A BIG FEE

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.

RETAINED ON A HARD CASE.

"Good-morning. Is this Mr. Dashington?" asked a musical voice, and Dick Dashington swung around to see by whom he was addressed.

He replied that the inquirer had found the right place as he whirled in his chair, and then beheld a vision of loveliness standing with her gloved hand on the office door, looking timidly at him.

"Won't you have a seat?" he gallantly asked, struggling to his feet and offering a chair to the young lady and another to the young man who accompanied her.

"Is this Mr. Dashington, the lawyer?" asked the girl again, this time with a little more certainty and also some surprise.

Dick answered that he was the person, and a little smile flitted over his face as he saw the reason for the girl's question—his youth.

"I thought there might be some mistake," she went on. "Mr. Campbell told me to call here to see you about my father. You know Mr. Campbell?"

"Yes, we are good friends. Mr. Campbell is one of the best men I know," replied Dick, again having to motion to the young man who was with his visitor to take a seat. "What was it you wished to see me about?"

"I have been hunting for a lawyer to take our case. It is a peculiar one, and I am worried because all the lawyers seem to be so busy. Are you too busy, too?"

"That depends upon the case," smiled Dick. "We are sometimes too busy when the case looks too hard to win.

You must know that lawyers are in the business to win—that is, most of us are."

"That must be the trouble with this case, then," she sighed. "I have seen three lawyers, and the last one, Mr. Campbell, told me to come and see you, because he said you would like to handle it."

Dick waited in silence for her to relate the case.

"My name is Evelyn Harris," and Dick exclaimed mentally that the name exactly suited her, she was so pretty and demure. "My father is the representative in Brookdale of the Eastern Chemical Company. His office is in the Mona Building. You have read of the charge which is against him, have you not—of the robbery of Mr. Delong?"

Dick said that he had read in the morning papers of the arrest of Mr. Harris on that serious charge.

"I'll tell you the story as well as I can," she went on, after looking at the young man who was with her. "First, let me introduce you to my cousin, Tom Harris."

Dick bowed his acknowledgment of the introduction and turned his eyes at once to the girl to bid her go on with the story.

"Late yesterday afternoon some people who have offices along the same hall in the Mona Building heard yells for help coming from papa's office. They ran in there and saw him standing over the body of Mr. Delong with a revolver in his hand. The revolver was covered with blood, and Mr. Delong was lying on the floor, his head appearing to be cut. It was an awful wound, papa says, and the man seemed to be dead. Some one rang for the police, and when they came they found papa still standing there looking down at the man and holding the revolver in his hand."

Dick bowed his acknowledgment of this much of the story, and the girl continued:

"They took papa to the police station and took the man to the hospital. The police would not listen to papa's denial of the charge that he had attacked the man. I went to the station last night and talked to papa for a long time. You see, I am the only one in the family besides Tom. Mamma died a long time ago. Papa told me that he came into the office just as the screams for help ceased, and he said Mr. Delong was lying on the floor with the revolver beside him, and that he went in and picked up the revolver, as a person would naturally do when they would discover such a thing in their office.

"He says he didn't attack Mr. Delong at all, and that he did not strike him. Papa says he was not in the office and that he was just coming out of the elevator when he heard the cries for help in his office, and that he ran there as quickly as he could."

Dick at once saw an opening by which an alibi could be proved, and he asked steadily, so as not to excite the girl:

"Are you sure that your father was just stepping from the elevator when he heard the cries for help?"

The girl hesitated for a moment.

"I don't remember whether papa said he was just stepping out of the elevator or not. He said he came up on the elevator, though, when he was on his way to the office."

Here was a point which it behooved Dick to remember.

"Do you know whether Mr. Delong and your father are friends?" asked he.

This time there was a movement on the part of the cousin, Tom, and Dick's quick eyes swung that way. But Tom was merely moving one leg over the other, and changing his position in the chair.

"I don't know whether they were or not," she answered.

"I know they were not," quickly interposed Tom Harris. "Uncle Joe and Mr. Delong had a quarrel yesterday morning about some money matters."

This added a new phase to the situation.

"How do you know they had a quarrel?" asked Dick.

"I heard them. Mr. Delong is a broker, you know. Well, he was carrying on some kind of a deal for Uncle Joe, and they quarreled about some money that Uncle Joe said he wanted and wanted quick."

"Mr. Delong is not dead, is he?" asked Dick, remembering that the account which he read in the papers had not said the man was dead.

"No, he isn't dead, but he might die," answered Evelyn.

"Uncle Joe is arrested for robbery, anyway," chimed in Tom Harris. "When the police came into the office they found that a big leather purse which Mr. Delong carried was empty, and there were two of those bank slips which they put around rolls of bills, and each one of them had a mark of 'one thousand dollars' on them."

"Those bands were on the floor?" asked Dick.

"They were on a little table with the big leather purse, and the money was gone," answered Tom.

Dick saw a certain amount of certainty in the tone of the young man, and so he aimed his next question straight at the cousin:

"How do you know?"

Tom Harris looked at the young lawyer with a sudden start, and then replied:

"I saw them when a policeman picked them up and held them up to Uncle Joe in the office."

"Oh, you were there, then?" asked Dick.

"I got there a few minutes after the crowd ran in and just as the police came up the hallway. I was on my way to see Uncle Joe on some business."

"Then your father is charged with robbery and assault?" asked Dick, his eyes now turned toward the young lady.

She answered that this was the fact, and continued:

"Won't you take the case and prove papa's innocence? I know he didn't kill Mr. Delong or try to kill him, and I know he wouldn't rob any one. Papa doesn't have to rob any one—he has plenty of money."

There was a tone of pleading in the girl's voice which it was hard for any young man to resist. Besides that, she was pretty, the fairest creature Dick had seen in many a day, and Brookdale could well boast of many pretty girls, too.

"Is your father still in jail?" he asked quietly.

"Yes; you see, the police won't let him out because Mr. Delong might die, and they won't let him give any bond yet."

From this Dick realized that the condition of the injured man must be worse even than the morning papers had said.

"Did you say you heard Mr. Harris quarreling with Mr. Delong?" asked Dick, turning to the young cousin of the girl.

"That's what I said," the young fellow replied rather sharply.

"Where did the quarrel take place?" queried the young lawyer.

"In Uncle Joe's office," came the steady reply.

"Did any one else hear the quarrel?"

"Yes, there was one other man standing just outside the door with whom I was talking. Both of us heard them quarreling."

"Who was that other man?" asked Dick.

"His name is Travis," and the reply was very slow.

"What does he do?" as Dick pursued the questions.

"He is president of the Kentucky Real Estate Company."

The young man was twisting about in his chair at the sharp questions of the youthful lawyer, and there was a hesitancy at times as if he would not answer the questions.

"Where is his place of business?" continued Dick Dashington.

"It appears as if I am on the witness stand," answered the young man with a peculiar sort of smile on his face.

"Do you wish to see your uncle remain in jail on this charge?" came back Dick with a quick sweep of his eyes toward the young fellow.

"Travis' office is next to Uncle Joe's, in the little hall to the rear," answered Tom Harris, unheeding of the quick question which Dick had delivered about wishing his uncle to remain in jail.

"How did it come that the door to Mr. Harris' office was open when they were quarreling about money?" was the next question.

"I was just going into the office and had my hand on the knob," was the reply, as steady as any of the replies which the cousin was making.

"Why didn't you close the door when you learned they

were discussing business and it was none of the business of either you or this man Travis?"

"I don't know as that is anybody's business," was the hasty reply.

With this Dick looked the young fellow squarely in the eyes and came back with a reply in a steady, even tone, menacingly quiet:

"I rather think your uncle's business would have been so much yours that you should have closed the door against strangers."

Under this the cousin's face reddened considerably, and he turned away from the gaze of Dick, tapping his walking-stick against his shoe.

Dick swung to his desk after a moment and fumbled with some papers. His mind was going like lightning over what he had learned and he was judging of the possibilities of winning the case if he should take it.

Suddenly he faced the young lady, who was staring at him in mute appeal, looked her squarely in the face, and said:

"You may tell your father I shall take his case. You may say that I shall call on him some time during the early part of the day and we'll get his story completely. Please tell him that he must not, under any consideration, speak with any one about the case, even with you. Do you understand?"

The young lady rose from her seat and extended an impulsive hand.

"Oh, I thank you ever so much for your kindness. I'll go right up to papa and tell him what you say."

Dick held her hand in his, clasping it heartily, and rose from his seat, looking into her deep blue eyes.

"I think there are several things he knows that will do us good. In the meanwhile it would be well for him to be quiet. The first thing, of course, is to see that he has bond as soon as Delong is out of danger, which ought to be in a few hours, if at all."

At this the girl shuddered, with her hand yet resting in Dick's, and Dick went on, unconsciously holding the hand.

"Do not allow any one to see him until I arrive. I have some important business that needs attention first, and then I will be at the jail."

Tom Harris had arisen by this time and was looking out of the window of the little law office, tapping his cane against his shoe yet, but seeming to be in a brown study.

"And, Mr. Harris," as Dick addressed the young man, "if you really wish to see your uncle out of this trouble I would advise that you say absolutely nothing until you are placed on the stand. Things are changed quite a bit by being handled by the tongues of those who care nothing for the man who is in trouble."

"Oh, I guess I can keep my tongue all right," replied the young man, and while he was speaking Dick had the opportunity of studying his face and his pose to a little better advantage. He saw a face that showed the marks of dissipation very strongly, and he mentally calculated that this fellow would be dangerous to handle if he took a dislike.

"Would you mind staying here a little while?" he asked of Harris. "You may go, Miss Harris, and tell your father what I have said. Your cousin will not join you just now."

"I must see Evelyn over to that place—it's awful," said the cousin as he essayed to leave with the young lady.

"But I would prefer that you remain right here with me a little while," quietly spoke Dick, laying a detaining hand on the young man's shoulder and forcing him back to his seat, as the young lady smiled, bowed to the young lawyer and was on her way to the station.

CHAPTER II.

STORY OF THE CRIME.

"Mr. Harris," Dick addressed the cousin of the young lady as soon as they took seats together by the desk, Tom sitting near the window, "do you think Delong was robbed by your uncle?"

Dick spoke in a very confidential tone, quite a bit different from that which he had assumed previously with the young fellow.

Harris was looking out of the window and seemed to be attracted by something which he saw, continuing to look with interest below before answering the question.

"I don't know what to think about it," he at last replied.

"But don't you think that Delong refused to let him have the money or a large part of it and your uncle just about wrestled with him for it, and that the accident of getting hit in the head might have been a real accident of some kind?"

Dick asked this question, too, in a very confidential tone, trying to win the interest of the young fellow.

"I really don't know what to think," answered Tom Harris, still doggedly refusing to be led by the questions.

Dick leaned over the writing panel of his desk to look at something which his eyes caught on the sleeve of the young fellow, and while Harris was intently looking through the window the young lawyer was intently gazing at the spot. There was something peculiar about it, being situated just about at the elbow, and seemed to be almost black.

"Mr. Harris was a very hot-tempered fellow, wasn't he?" asked Dick calmly.

"Hot-tempered!" and the younger Harris looked at him quickly. "Well, I should say he was hot-tempered! He was so hot-tempered he started to lick me yesterday morning because I asked him for a measly little loan of a few dollars that I promised I'd pay him in a couple of days."

This was beginning to get interesting to Dick, and he pursued the same tack.

"I always understood he was a warm-tempered fellow," he replied to Tom with a quiet air that seemed to simply desire a little gossip. "Tight with his coin, too, eh?" and Dick smiled pleasantly.

"Tight? I should say so! He used to give me whatever I wanted, but lately, since he's got mixed up with Delong, he's been refusing me, even when I offered to pay him back with interest. Gee! He started at me yesterday morning like he'd tear my head off for asking him for a two-by-four loan of a few simoleons."

"That's the way with lots of these men," commented Dick, keeping the corner of his eye on the young fellow. "They forget that a fellow has to have money every now and then to square things up."

"I needed the money pretty badly yesterday, too, when he refused me, but I guess it was because he was short of funds

himself, or he wouldn't have had the trouble with Delong," answered the boy as he continued to look out of the window.

"Why didn't you tell him what it was for?" ventured Dick.

"Gee! That never would have done! Lordy, he would have thrown me out of the house if he'd known that I wanted to pay gambling debts. But I just had to pay 'em—you know how it is, debts of honor and all that," as young Harris wheeled toward Dick and looked fairly at the lawyer.

"That's right!" exclaimed Dick. "If he'd known that he wouldn't let you have a cent, I guess, from what I hear about him. - One of those strong-minded fellows about a fellow's betting on the pasteboards, eh?" as he smiled winningly at young Harris.

"That's just him, exactly," was the rejoinder. "He never handled the little white cards and he doesn't know anything about it. Regular martinet about the house, too. Evelyn's the only one that can run him. He's told me a dozen times that he was going to put me out of the house if I asked him for any more money. But, gee! what's a fellow to do when he loses a little wad? He's got to pay, hasn't he? And Uncle Joe would never miss it."

"Did he ever see you jagged?" asked Dick.

"I don't believe so," answered the younger Harris. "I always dodged out of his way when I had a load on. One night he almost caught me when I passed by his door. Funniest thing you ever saw. I got mixed up in the doors and started to go into his room, and he got up and came to the door, but I managed to get into mine before he saw me. It was a close call for me, all right!"

Dick had learned several things by winning some of the confidence of the young fellow—that he was a drinker, a gambler, and that he was a leech on his uncle.

"What were you going to do when you started back there yesterday afternoon, when they found him with the gun standing over Delong—going to try another touch?"

At this young Harris paled slightly and a shudder passed through him. He quickly looked away from Dick and gazed out of the window as he replied:

"What else could I do? Needed the money, didn't I?"

"Why didn't you get a loan from Travis for a little while, till the storm blew over, and then you could have touched the old gentleman better, maybe?" ventured Dick, though this was hazardous.

"I did! That was the trouble!" exclaimed Tom. "Travis loaned me some money a few weeks ago, and I was due to pay him yesterday like I promised. I'd been putting him off for a week, and he was pressing me to beat the band."

Dick thought for another minute. This was another phase in the matter, and it was putting him on his mettle.

"Well," as he stretched and rose from his chair, "I told the young lady I'd be up there and see the old gentleman in a little while. Don't guess it's much use, but I'll take the chance, anyhow."

With these words he reached for his hat and the younger Harris rose to leave the room with him. Below stairs, when they reached the street, young Harris started in a different direction from that taken by Dick, who went toward the county jail, in which the man was confined until bail was fixed and allowed.

After passing along the street for two blocks and having noted that young Harris was not coming in this direction

and that he had gone straight along the street in the opposite direction, Dick suddenly turned and walked to the Mona Building.

Inquiring from the elevator boy where was the office of Joseph Harris, he was directed to the right place and followed along the hall to the door on which was printed the name of the man.

Opening the door he found a stenographer sitting at her place reading the morning paper, while the desks were all straightened and waiting for any business. No one else was in the room.

"Good-morning. Is this Mr. Harris' office?" he asked. Receiving an affirmative reply he said:

"Mr. Harris asked me to call up here and look about the place. There are several things he wanted me to see for his lawyers."

The young lady at once rose from her chair and asked if there was anything in particular he desired to see.

"No, nothing in particular. I'll take a look around the place. This is where the man was found, isn't it?" as he pointed to a large stain on the floor of the office.

The girl answered in the affirmative, and after Dick walked into the rear office she fell to her reading again.

Dick's walking into the rear office was so that he would no longer attract her notice. He wanted to get the exact lay of the ground before going to see Mr. Harris, so that he could the better converse about the office and the man who was found injured there.

Near the stain on the floor he saw two desks, one of which was a roll-top office desk and the other a sort of library table, at which open business was done.

The little room in the rear was a sort of private office, and there was a door which led outward to another hallway.

Dick tried the door, but found it locked. It was fastened by a spring catch and he released it, allowing him to go out quietly into that small hall. Just in front of him he saw the sign of the "Kentucky Real Estate Company" in small gold letters displayed on a door across the hall!

So that was the office of Travis, eh?

Dick stood in the door and looked at the place for a long minute. Then he quietly strolled along the small hallway and found that it took him into the main hall, coming out fifteen feet or about that distance away from the door of Harris' office.

"I guess I know this place well enough. Now I'll go back and call on Uncle Joe and see what he has to say about things."

Thinking thus, he retraced his steps, closed the rear office door behind him and went back into the main office, where the stenographer was still quietly reading the paper.

"Thank you ever so much," he smiled as he started to place his hat on his head and went out of the office into the main hallway, while the young lady bowed politely to him and resumed her paper.

Over to the jail he went and was admitted to the cell of Joseph Harris, first going to the docket and seeing that two charges were preferred by the arresting officer against the man and that he was being held pending the condition of the injured man at the hospital.

"Oh, I am so glad you came! It has been so long, and I thought you might be going to wait until later!" exclaimed

Miss Evelyn as she came forward and greeted the young lawyer.

He took her hand in his very cordially, and again was not conscious of the long time he held it as he was introduced to the father of the girl.

Harris was a man of a little beyond the middle age, a man of clear-cut features, a strong face, deep blue eyes like those of his daughter, his hair slightly gray.

"So this is the young lawyer my daughter found?" he asked as he took Dick's hand. "Do you think you are able to handle this case?"

The man seemed to have his doubts about the ability of the boy.

"I think I shall be able to handle the case, Mr. Harris, but if you do not wish me, why, of course, I won't think of taking it. I am here to see whether you wish to retain me."

Dick was straightforward about the business. It was nothing more nor less than business with him. Criminal cases had been out of his line, because he had found a more lucrative practice in civil cases, but he was willing to take this case if the man wished to keep him.

"Well, let us talk the matter over a little, and then we'll see about that," briefly answered the man.

Dick took a seat on the edge of the cot, where Evelyn joined him, the prisoner keeping the only chair of which the cell could boast.

"In the first place, I should like to hear the story from you precisely as you remember it," said Dick, coming at once to the business. "Of course, you know, in the first place, that I don't want you to repeat the story or any part of it to any one else, no matter who he is. I have no representative and will have none. I shall be the only one working on this case, and I want no one else to know anything from you."

To this the man at once agreed, saying that thus far he had remained perfectly silent, his business having long since taught him that silence was the best in any instance.

"Give me the story, then, exactly, leaving out nothing that you think will have a bearing on the case."

At once the man fell into the narrative, in this wise:

"Delong was a broker for me in several deals which I made recently, winning and losing, according to the turns of the wheel of fortune on the exchange. I had an idea that I had won something in the end, and I needed the money to carry out some plans of mine for permanent investment. I called Delong to the office yesterday morning and asked him for the money. He pulled out his account book and told me what the amount was. I did not figure it the same way and I told him so. We had some words, though they did not amount to much. They might have sounded bad, but that is because Delong is a very loud talker and he is very excitable about anything.

"Well, I had my way about the matter, for I showed him by pulling out my own account book of the deals which I had ordered that I was right in most instances. We went into the rear office and talked over the matter more carefully after I showed him that I had been keeping account of the deals and knew what I was talking about. There were several small things that we quibbled about, but I saw that I was winner enough to allow for the small things and I let him have them. We came to an agreement

about the money and he was to bring up two thousand dollars yesterday afternoon.

"He must have got to the office a little ahead of the hour appointed, because I know as I started up the steps that I was on time."

"Did you say you went up the steps or took the elevator?" asked Dick.

"I took the steps because the elevator had just left the bottom, and I missed it," answered the man. "I stopped in the upper hall for a moment to glance at a new card of instructions to the janitor which had just been posted, and I wanted to see what changes had been made in his duties. Then I heard some cries from the direction of my office and ran down the hall to see what was the trouble. I opened the door and saw poor Delong lying on the floor, his head cut and a gun lying on the floor beside him. I picked the weapon up and was looking at it to see if it had been discharged when two or three men came into the office, and they saw me standing that way. Then they arrested me, and that's all I can say."

"Did you ever see the gun before?" asked Dick.

"No. It was an old weapon, one that had been used considerably, but I had never seen it."

CHAPTER III.

TOM HARRIS IN THE PAWNSHOP.

"Was the stenographer in the office at the time?" asked Dick.

The man replied that she was not, that the time of evening was after she had gone home for the day, since he did not keep her there after three o'clock in the afternoon.

"Was there any one else in the office when you got there?" asked Dick.

"No, there was no one. I was the first to reach the place, because I was already the nearest to the office when I heard the cries."

"Did your nephew come into the office while you were standing there beside the injured man?"

"As I recollect," said the man very slowly, "he came in about the time those policemen arrived. Some one must have sent for the police right away, because they got there just after the crowd came into the room."

Dick studied over the matter for a moment, and then suddenly asked:

"Did you lock up the office before the police took you to the station?"

"Yes, they allowed me to lock up," replied the man.

"You had two doors to lock," went on Dick, "the rear door of the little office leading into the hallway, and the front door leading outward to the main hallway."

"Yes, that is right," answered Harris. "I don't know how the rear door came to be open, come to think of it, because I rarely unlock that door. I suppose the scrub-woman must have left it open by accident when she went out."

"You say you rarely unlock that door?" asked Dick.

"No, there is no need for it. You see, that is supposed to be a dodging door for getting away from people or for letting out those to whom you have been talking in private when there is some one else in the front room."

"And you know that the door was locked when you left it?"

"Oh, yes; I always see that the rear office door is locked, because that would be the way any one would come in if they wished to bother things in the office."

"Did you get a chance to say anything to Delong about the money?" Dick next asked.

"No, he was unconscious. That swipe across the head must have been a vicious one, for he was unconscious until he was taken out, and that was before they took me away. I would not leave until they had taken Delong to the hospital."

"It may be quite possible that Delong can say who struck him?" asked the young lawyer.

The man responded that it was quite possible.

"And was he sitting, do you suppose, when he was struck?" asked Dick.

"Yes, that is something I noticed especially. The typewriter chair was overturned, and a newspaper which he must have been reading was lying on the floor beside him. Some of the blood was on the paper, too."

Dick could think of nothing more that would be of use to him, and he asked if the man wished to retain him.

"I think I shall, young man," responded the man. "You strike me as a bright young fellow, and Evelyn here is so confident of the matter that I think you may as well take the case. I would like to get out of jail as soon as possible—as soon as they will let me have bond. I'll make a cash bond if they wish it. If you win this case I'll give you five thousand dollars."

Dick thanked the man heartily and rose to leave. At the cell door the young lady placed her hand in his and grasped it firmly, hoping he would win the case for them both.

"If for no other reason than that you wish it I shall do my best to win," he gallantly replied. "I shall do my utmost," and he was gone.

In the office of the chief of police he found the chief, Manley Dorris, one of his friends, and a man who was recognized in the State as the best and squarest police official that was holding office. Dorris was well acquainted with the ways of criminals, for he was rarely wrong in making an estimate of a man.

"Chief, what do you think of this Harris case?" he asked, taking the seat which the chief proffered.

"Well, Dick, my boy, it appears to me a clear case against poor Harris. That fellow Delong was knocked in the head with the gun, and Harris was holding the gun in his hand just a minute after Delong yelled for help. It looked like Harris was dazed and couldn't get away in time. You know they had a quarrel in the morning and that might have caused the whole thing. I understand that Harris called Delong a thief and that Delong said he would get even for that. Then he called Harris a robbing cur, and Harris tried to grapple with Delong then, but the fellow got away. Then they went into that rear room and they had some more rough words."

"Who heard all this?" asked Dick.

"Can't say about that," answered the chief. "What are you, anyway? Counsel for the prisoner?"

Dick responded that he was holding that honor.

"I believe you've got the worst side of it," remarked the chief. "The thing is against Harris. Looks to me like

he's guilty. All the evidence that we've got is against him right now."

"But you're going to work on the case, aren't you, through the detectives?" asked Dick. "Surely you aren't going to take circumstantial evidence against the prisoner."

"That's just what we're going to do, Dick," responded the chief. "It doesn't appear to me that we ought to work any more. What more evidence do you want against him than what we have? He's found in the office with the weapon in his hand, standing over the body of the fellow with whom he quarreled in the morning. The money's gone and no one saw anything or any one else about the office. He says he got there when he heard the yells, but others say he couldn't have, because they ran right out of their offices and he wasn't in sight."

Certainly this did look bad, but it did not stop our young lawyer.

"What if some of the evidence can be knocked out?" asked Dick.

"I'd like to see how you or any one else is going to knock it out," said the chief very confidently. "It's just as I told you. Harris won't talk to us and we can't get his side of the story. He just shuts up like a clam, and that's the reason that this evidence looks bad."

"But I told him to keep still—it's legal advice," quickly answered Dick.

"That doesn't help his side of the matter any. He's in for it, and I'm afraid, Dick, that you've stacked against the hardest side of the matter. I hope you'll be able to knock our pins out if you can, but I don't believe you can."

Now Dick saw something of what he had to do. He left the chief's office after several minutes and passed into the office of the desk sergeant.

"Sergeant, I'm the counsel for Mr. Harris, and I'd like to see the weapon that he had when they found him standing over Delong yesterday," he said.

The sergeant, another of Dick's friends among the police, went to his safe and obtained the weapon. He handed it to Dick and stood while the boy examined the weapon.

The handle of the revolver was covered with blood and hair, showing that it had been used for more than one stroke, or else that the first stroke must have been a powerful one. It was of a prominent make, an old-styled type of weapon, and the barrel was a little rusty. The size was .38 caliber, and the shells were yet in the gun, none of them fired. Dick threw the chambers open and looked in to see the shells, not allowing them to fall from the weapon, however.

Handing it back to the sergeant he started from the station and made his way back to his office.

"I guess I am up against it," he thought, as he threw himself into his chair and started to ruminate on the case. "The police won't do anything more than they have done. It's a sure thing they have a case against Harris if some one doesn't smash their evidence. It's all circumstantial, of course, but that's just the way with the average police—they take everything for granted because it happens to look so from the easiest standpoint. I don't believe old Harris ever hit that fellow—what was the use for doing it? He was to be paid the money, anyway, and what was the use to slug poor Delong in the head to get it? Then, they didn't find the money on him, so what became of it? If he

had grabbed the money when he hit Delong he would have had it yet, for he hadn't taken time to get rid of the weapon, and he certainly would have laid that down while he put the money away. If he was so dazed that he couldn't do anything but stand there with the weapon until the people ran into the office, how does it come that he got the money where nobody could find it?"

Dick was rapidly bringing the case to his mind and preparing the defense which would have to be made. To him it looked as if the circumstantial evidence could be partially knocked out, but could he knock enough out to save the man from being convicted?

"If Delong could talk we'd be able to get something from him."

With this thought Dick pulled his hat more carefully over his head and left the office, going straight to the hospital, having to wait only a moment or two at the corner for a car.

At the hospital he was told that Mr. Delong was resting easily, but that he was not yet out of danger, and that no one could see him.

Here was another setback. What could he do?

Back toward the office he started, this time walking, because he wanted to study on the case and try to figure out something to do. There was short time, for the preliminary hearing of the prisoner would be held on the next day.

"Wonder what he's doing down in this part of town?" asked Dick of himself as he caught sight of Tom Harris about a block ahead. Dick had walked across town and was roaming toward the river-front, through a part of town that was not frequented by the better classes.

"Into the sign of the three balls, eh?" he muttered as he saw the young fellow go into one of the many low business houses along that street.

It was a pawnshop, and he thought he would watch the movements of the young man who gambled and drank and tried to pry money out of his uncle, and then was not particularly desirous of seeing his uncle released from jail.

Taking the opposite side of the street he strolled down until he reached a stairway just opposite the door of the pawnshop into which the younger Harris had gone.

"He takes a look at some guns, eh?" as Dick saw Harris handling some weapons, swinging them toward the rear of the store and holding them for a moment as if he were trying the sights or the weight of the guns.

For several minutes the young man handled guns, looking at all of them very carefully, throwing them open and closing them, inspecting as if he were investing a large sum in a gun and wished to get the best he could. It was evident that he knew what he was doing in making his selection, or was trying to impress the salesman with the idea that he knew what he was doing.

After a while he emerged from the store, stood for a moment at the front of the place and then turned back up the street by the way he had come.

"I might go over there and take a look at some guns myself," thought Dick, coming out of the stairway and leisurely sauntering over to the store.

"Howdy," he called out to the man who stepped forward to wait on him. "I want to see a gun or two," he announced.

With a low bow the man led the way to the middle of the

store where the weapons were on display in a broad case, and began to take them out for Dick's inspection.

"Harris was just in here and bought one," said Dick, after looking at several of the revolvers. "What kind did he get? He usually buys something that suits him."

The man looked at Dick very closely and said that he didn't know any one by the name of Harris.

"Why, that fellow that just left here," said Dick, looking up at the man with an impatient glance.

The man relented at once and showed Dick the kind that Tom had bought.

"That isn't the kind he got the other day," ventured Dick.

"Oh, you mean de leedle one vich de chentleman bought," as he pulled out several more.

Dick bowed his head and examined those which the man presented.

"None of these are like it—he had a Smith & Wesson .38. It worked fine the other day when I saw it."

"Ach, yes, you mean de one vich he pought day pefore yesterday. Dat is id? Schmidt und Vesson. Yes, he pought de last one vich I hat."

The man looked all through his weapons, but could find nothing that suited Dick. He was looking for the same kind that Harris had bought day before yesterday and he wanted no other.

Just as they were looking at a new lot which the man pulled out Tom Harris walked into the store and saw Dick. Before he could duck back and out of the place Dick had looked up and they recognized each other.

"De chentleman vas looking for a revolver like de one vich you pought de——"

The man stopped of a sudden and Dick knew that a sign had been passed.

"Looking for a gun, eh?" asked Tom pleasantly.

"Yes, I want one like he sold you day before yesterday—Smith & Wesson .38," answered Dick, looking directly at the young fellow.

Immediately Tom went pale and trembled, biting his lip. Then he tried to smile, but it was a very weak one.

"I hope you will find one," he said at last. "Ike, I left this package here and I came to get it," with which he walked out again.

CHAPTER IV.

SLUGGED BY MASKED MEN.

"I think I'll begin actively to run down this thing and see what our friend Thomas is doing with revolvers. Looks just a little like that Smith & Wesson was his before it got into the possession of the police. I wonder if he can explain that situation. A few items about him would be a mighty good thing."

Ruminating thus Dick walked out of the place, along the street away from the river-front, toward his own office.

Here he stopped in to think the matter out. It was very plain that he would receive no aid from the police—that whatever he did he must do on his own hook. He must play his own detective, because very few detectives, even if he wished to hire one, would take a case in which the evidence pointed so conclusively to the prisoner's guilt.

"Tom knows the pawnbroker, or else the broker wouldn't have played clam when he came into the store this afternoon. If he doesn't know the pawnbroker, then the pawnbroker is crooked and so is Tom, or they wouldn't have passed a sign to shut off the broker from talking. That much we have to start on. I wonder how Delong is getting on?"

With this he applied to his telephone and called the hospital, receiving a reply that Delong was conscious and showing a little improvement, but that the doctors still forbade his seeing any one.

"That means that friend Delong tells us nothing for our edification until to-morrow at the earliest, and it is right now growing late into the afternoon. A little meal would do me good, and I'll get it instanter."

Dick was thinking so plainly that he was almost talking aloud as he left his office and started for his home.

"You look worried, Dick," said his mother as he walked into his little study at home and dropped into a chair to think over things. "What is the trouble?"

"The trouble isn't mine, mother," he answered, smiling up at her as she laid a hand on his head and stroked his hair. "I've got a case that takes some studying, and I'm just trying to figure out the best way to go about it."

There were times when Dick allowed his mother to become his partner in his cases and help him out, for he relied a great deal on her womanly intuition and the judgment of the years which she possessed.

Dick was fatherless, and his mother was largely dependent upon the income which he made. So it had been for several years, since the death of his father, and he had managed to get a law education and to open up a small office while he was working as a clerk and making a little money making out papers for various lawyers, among whom was Mr. Campbell, who had, since Dick entered the bar, been the instructor and guide of the boy in several of his cases. It was this same Mr. Campbell who had sent this case to him when other lawyers had found themselves too busy to take it.

It was quite late in the evening, and darkness was falling when Dick left his home and started for the jail to see his client again.

Here he was refused admittance, the police announcing that it was after hours for visitors, and he applied to the chief, without being allowed to see his client. This was just a little out of the usual, but he made no remarks and allowed the police department to hold the situation in their own hands.

The particular person he desired to see was Miss Evelyn, and so he repaired to a drug-store and used the city directory.

"Quite a walk at this time of the evening, but I guess I'll make it," he soliloquized, as he stepped out of the drug-store and started for the north part of the city to see the young lady at the Harris home.

At the Harris home he inquired from the servant for the young lady.

"Miss Evelyn left here about a half-hour ago," answered the servant, who seemed to be much excited. "I wish I could hear from Mr. Joe. This is awful!"

The tone of the servant struck Dick as rather peculiar.

"I am her lawyer and the lawyer for Mr. Harris," he

replied at once, hoping this would have an allaying effect upon the servant. "Would you please tell me if there is anything wrong?"

The servant looked at the boy intently for a moment and then opened the door a little more widely, allowing him to enter.

"Miss Evelyn left here a while ago with two men. They came here after her, and she said she wouldn't see them, but while I was in the back of the house I heard her scream and a few seconds after that an automobile drove up to the house and I saw the two men take her to it and put her in, and then the auto ran away down the street awfully fast."

The girl told this story in one breath, so excited was she.

"How did you come to be in the rear of the house?" asked Dick.

"There was a knock back there and I left the men at the front door for a minute while I went back to see who it was."

"Was there anybody back there, and who was it?"

"That's the funny part about it," answered the servant girl. "There wasn't anybody there when I got to the back door, and just then I heard Miss Evelyn scream and I ran to the front of the house and one of the men pushed me back and one of them carried her out to the auto, and that's all."

"How long ago did that happen?" continued Dick coolly.

"About a half-hour ago."

"Why didn't you telephone to the police?"

"Oh, I didn't know what to do. I was afraid to go out and tell the neighbors, because one of the men told me to keep my tongue still or he'd kill me if I didn't. I was afraid."

"What kind of a looking man was he?" asked Dick.

"I don't know. I couldn't see him very well. You see how dark the hall is, and I couldn't tell anything about him."

"Didn't any of the neighbors see the auto drive up and the men take Evelyn out?" asked Dick.

"I don't know. When they pushed me back and told me to keep still I almost fainted, I was so scared. I was sitting here on the steps waiting for the other girl to come in. She's been spending the afternoon out to-day."

"Where was Miss Evelyn when the men found her?" continued the boy.

"She was in that room right there," as the girl pointed to a little room off the main hall of the house on the first floor.

Dick asked to be allowed to see the room, and the servant led the way into the dainty little place, where Dick looked about, but could see nothing which would allow of his making any deductions.

"What kind of an auto did they have?" he asked on coming out.

The servant replied that she did not know—that she just heard the puffing of the machine as it pulled away, and that was all.

"You didn't see the machine at all?" he repeated the question.

The girl responded that she did not. It was quite dark in front of the house and the heavy trees in front of the place would not allow of her seeing anything at all.

Dick had stepped to the door and he saw that what the

girl said was about right: that the front walk was quite a distance away from the house, and that it was very dark there on account of the heavy foliage of the large trees which stood along the curbing of the street.

This was all he could obtain, and he left the house, asking the girl to say nothing at all to the other servant about the matter, and asking her not to say anything to any one else.

The girl was so wrought over the affair that Dick felt certain she would follow his injunctions, and he departed to think over the matter.

Out at the curbstone he plainly saw the tracks of the machine, and saw that they led up to the next street, whither he followed them, only to lose sight of the tracks in the maze of tracks in the next street, where many vehicles were passing every minute.

"Plain case of abduction," he muttered, standing on the corner and looking off up the street blankly. "What could they want with her, and who are they?"

Without paying heed whither he was going, Dick sauntered off down the street, going straight ahead without any idea of following the most-used street.

"There goes our friend Thomas!" he exclaimed to himself, catching sight of the cousin of the girl passing along one of the dark streets, smoking a cigarette and hurrying quite rapidly wherever he was going. "With nothing else to do I'll just follow him where he loses his money."

He hurried after the younger Harris, trying to get to the opposite side of the street and follow the young fellow so he would not be seen.

Suddenly Tom stopped, after walking several blocks and passing under several electric lights. He stood behind a tree, it seemed to Dick, and the young lawyer waited for him to emerge.

It was a wait of several minutes, and then the young fellow as quickly darted away from the tree and pursued his way along the street in the same direction he had been following.

Reaching the middle of the next block he darted into an alleyway, and stood there, though Dick could see him well enough, limned against the lighter color of a shed. Dick halted, too, and waited for the young fellow to proceed, which he did after another wait of several minutes.

Past three more electric lights he went, then turned toward the river street, and Dick took the opposite side of the street again to continue the pursuit.

"Wonder why he stopped and waited twice?" muttered the young lawyer to himself. But he kept doggedly on, noticing that Tom was leading the way into a very much unfrequented part of the city. Not a man did they pass, and all was very still, save for the washing and swishing of the waters of the river as they reached a point a block away, and the noise of the river came plainly to him from that short distance through the quiet night.

Suddenly the cousin darted into an alleyway next a large vacant building, and Dick hurried faster to get to a point where he could see the young fellow.

Standing across the street he saw that Tom had paused, that there was a succession of knocks on the side door of the building, on a platform to which stairs mounted, showing that Harris was accustomed to coming to this place and also showing that some one must be within.

Again came the succession of low knocks, and Dick

waited to see if he were allowed to enter. Then the door was quickly thrown open and young Harris stepped within, the door was slammed back, and all was still again.

"Wonder if that is a gambling joint or if——" The rest of the sentence caused a shudder to pass through him as he thought of it. Suppose, just suppose, that Tom Harris had something to do with the stealing of his cousin, and that she was in that building, down here by the river in the meanest and roughest portion of the city?

If she were in there it meant that he would not be allowed to get to her unless he stole his way in—that there would be guards to watch over her and see that she was not recovered by her friends.

But this was wasting time. That fellow Harris must be followed. What had he to do in this ill part of town at this time of night, giving secret knocks at the side door of a vacant building? Why was he not at the home of his uncle, trying to help that uncle out of the position into which he had fallen?

Dick crossed the street forthwith and walked into the side alley, looking up at the platform and at the door to see if there was any method of entering the building without being seen.

To the rear of the place, quite a few feet from the ground, was a ladder built on the end of the building, much like a fire-escape, and leading to windows in the second and third stories, for this was a three-story building, a sort of elevator or storehouse.

"Guess I'll just try that ladder if I can get to it, and then get inside from one of those windows."

Muttering this thought to himself, he stalked down the alley and found that he could mount to the ladder by way of a small shed which stood just behind the larger building.

After considerable work he managed to make the top of the shed, and then, after balancing well, he leaped far out and made the ladder at one leap, grabbing the rounds and taking chances on his impetus not tearing one of them away from its fastenings.

Up the ladder he went, going past the second-story window and getting to the third. Poking his head gradually up above the level of the sill he tried to peer within. The window was broken out! This would be easy.

Throwing a leg over the sill he slid within the building, landing on the floor with his toes first and not making a bit of noise.

"This is getting things easy, if they don't find me. Wonder if they're down below?" he questioned himself.

By the window he waited for a moment to accustom himself to the darkness of the place, and then moved along the floor, guided by the dim light of the night which filtered through the front windows away in the distance. The top floor was empty.

Slipping along he heard no noise, and looked about for the stairway.

Finding it in the center of the floor and leading toward one side, he placed his foot forward and started down.

Suddenly there was a noise behind him. He whirled and there in the semi-darkness were two men, each wearing a mask, and both of them leaped at him.

There was no chance for protection. He was on the steps. He could not struggle with advantage, but he turned to fight quickly as the fellows leaped at him, one of them

brandishing a club, the first blow of which fell on his shoulder and sent him against the side of the stairs. He tried to regain his balance, but another blow of the club came down, glancing along the side of his head, and things began to swim.

Instantly both of the men leaped again at him, one of them throwing an arm about his neck, while a hand covered his mouth.

CHAPTER V.

DICK'S NARROWEST ESCAPE.

"Fire! fire!" The cry came faintly to Dick from the streets below.

The crackle and the roar of flames sounded all about him.

Far below in the street along the river-front he could hear the yells of an excited crowd.

Dimly these things came to Dick and he tried to remember. There was a severe pain in his head. He started to lift his hand to place it there, but found he could not!

He tried to get to his feet—but he was bound. His hands were tied behind him, his feet were tied together, and he could breathe illy—for he was gagged!

He lifted his eyes to see what was the trouble: great flames leaped and danced, gleaming and glaring, in all parts of the building!

Where was he? What was all this?

Oh, yes, he remembered! He had entered an old vacant building in search of Tom Harris and possibly—and possibly of Evelyn! He walked across the top floor and reached the stairway. Then he was attacked by two masked men and they clubbed him. Now—now—this building was afire, his hands were tied behind him, his feet were fastened by ropes and a gag stopped him from calling for help!

Slowly at first, and then at a flash everything came back to him.

He was a prisoner in a burning building! They must have fired the place when they bound him here—and Tom Harris had come into that building a few minutes before! Was Tom Harris one of the masked men?

All these thoughts were hastily put aside, when he heard the heavy roar and ripping of timbers, then the dull crash of heavy planking falling somewhere in the distance.

He must get out of this—he must get out! Evelyn might be somewhere in the building! They might have bound and gagged her as they did him and left them both to perish.

Straining at the ropes which bound his hands he found he could not move them. He struggled over the floor, finding that he could roll about.

Giving himself a twist he lay on the left side, and from here he gave his body a jerk to throw it over completely to the right.

Chug! He hit something which stopped him half way, and he could move no farther in that direction. What was it he hit?

He tried to turn his head a little and found that he was lying against the stairs down which he had started to come.

Instantly he twisted his body so that his face was against the bottom step, and then by moving up and down and side-wise he tried to catch the handkerchief in something which

would tear it off. Trial after trial he made, working as fast as he could, feverishly fast, for the flames were raging through the place, gaining toward him every minute. Now he could hear them and see them at the other side of the place, lighting the windows with their fiery glare.

"Ouch!" he cried and grunted in pain, for a nail or something sharp struck him in the side of the face as he rubbed up and down the step.

Turning a little more he found his eyes just beneath an old nail which stuck out from the stairs.

He could see it plainly, for the flames lighted the entire floor and he could feel their heat as they crackled and rushed and raged and roared in their awful progress of destruction and desolation.

Straining his body to bend it sufficiently, he reached his face to the nail, and good luck was with him. The handkerchief or rag caught in the nail and he pulled steadily until he had it stretched a little, then gave a downward jerk and the rag came off. Quickly he opened his jaws and spit out the gag which was within.

And now to get his hands and legs free.

Many a time he had seen men on the vaudeville stage unloose themselves from binding ropes by twists of the wrists about which they were tied.

Tensing every muscle of his forearm he tried to stretch the bonds, but the trial was useless. Then he tried tensing one arm and allowing the muscles of the other to be flat and relaxed.

That was the trick! He found that one arm would almost come through the ropes. Trying it for a moment with one arm he changed to the other and then back again. A half-dozen trials were sufficient to show him that he was finding the way.

Then he allowed both arms to go relaxed and he shook and slipped one of them, while holding the other perfectly still. In a moment he slipped one arm out of the noose. Free at last!

A feeling of exultation went over him as he found one arm absolutely free, and in a moment the other came about in front of him and he was able to sit up with the use of both hands.

How they ached and pained! How long had he lain there, his entire weight on top of his arms while they were bent out of the normal position?

The clatter and clang of fire apparatus woke him to the realization that help might soon arrive. And the heat and roar of the flames as they leaped across the floor, taking whole yards of the flooring with them in their mad race, reminded him that he had no time to wait for outside aid.

This was a time when he must rely upon himself, when he must do for himself and wait for no one.

Quickly he bent to his legs and unbound the ropes which held them together at the ankles. There—free entirely!

Crawling to his feet, for they were numbed by the pressure which the ropes had brought, he found that his legs were almost useless. With his hands he rubbed his lower limbs, trying to bring back the circulation and to stimulate the nerves which controlled the muscles.

Boom! Crash! The floor on which he was sitting caved in at one side, and he was in the midst of leaping and dancing flames, plaster, rotten timbers, and clouds of dust and smoke!

"Great goodness!" The exclamation escaped his lips when he saw where he was.

Below everything was a mass of flames and the long tongues leaped and licked toward him, clouds of smoke swirled and whirled upward, and the heat of the fire was intense, dangerously intense!

In an instant he fell backward, to save himself from toppling into the great hole—the entire floor on that side had caved in under the weakening influence of the raging fire, and back of him was the little flooring which was left between death and safety.

Getting to his feet he found that the circulation had returned, that his limbs were fit. Quickly he dashed across the floor toward the rear windows, which he could see through the light of flames which were licking their way through crevices and holes in that part of the structure.

What a fire trap this was! A perfect fire trap! Death was stalking in his presence, holding out its long, gaunt arms, trying to catch him while he ran toward the rear wall, hoping the ladder was there.

Leaping at one of the windows he threw it up and found—the ladder!

In a moment his feet were out, they found the rounds of the ladder and he started quickly down.

Boom! boom! crash! With an awful din and roar, with the ripping and tearing and smashing of glass and timber and heavy scantlings, with the popping and roaring of falling brickwork and masonry, the entire wall of the building caved in from him, directly into the yawning chasm of fire, just as he reached the little shed.

The ladder on which he had descended bent and tore from its fastenings, falling into the fire, while great sparks leaped heavenward, endangering many buildings in that section, and the long tongues of flame leaped in all their awful glory to eagerly grasp this new food for their life.

Dick shuddered and stood on that little shed in awe and fear of what had happened.

Was Evelyn in that awful place? Was that girl bound and gagged as he was, and had she been left there to perish?

Where were those who had fired the place, who had knocked him senseless and bound him, leaving him to suffer the fate which possibly the girl had met? Who were they and where?

Swish! A heavy stream of water caught him fairly in the breast and he fell to the roof of the shed as the firemen raised the stream and sent it into the ruins of the fallen building.

Quickly he climbed from the shed, and two men picked him up in the alley as he toppled over and fell in sheer exhaustion after his narrow escape from that fearful death by fire.

"Who are you? What're you doing here?" quickly asked the two men in firemen's uniform as he tried to struggle to his feet.

Dick tried to answer, but immediately his presence of mind returned and he thought better of the sharp retort which he started to make in the excitement of it all.

Staggering to his feet he found he was strong enough to walk and quickly got out of the alley which was a furnace now from the heat of the burning ruins which lay there to mark the building into which he had climbed in search of Tom Harris—and Evelyn.

A few moments he stood in front of the fire, on the main street, and watched the work of the men at the hose. Then he turned and started toward the business section of town. Where should he go?

His steps, while he was studying over the adventures through which he had passed, took him toward his office, and before he was conscious of his movements he found himself in his little law office, with the few old tomes of the law stacked about to tell him that he was safe.

"Eleven o'clock! Great goodness, I must have been in there a long time!" he exclaimed to himself as the turning of the electric light showed him his alarm-clock resting on the top of his desk.

He dropped into his chair and thought over the escape for a little while, and an unconscious look into the little mirror which hung above the desk told him that he was bleeding on the cheek, that his hair was matted and tangled and that his clothes were twisted all out of shape.

"No wonder those fellows wanted to know who I was and what I was doing there!" he thought as he rose from the chair and surveyed himself.

Going to the basin in his little back room he cleaned the blood and grime from his face, combed his hair and then brushed himself off, again peering into the glass to learn that he was a much more presentable sight.

Soundly he slept that night, after walking the entire distance to his home, out in the west side of town.

The next morning found him much refreshed, but with the thoughts of the night before renewed a thousand times as strongly in his mind.

Eagerly he grabbed up the morning paper at breakfast and read of the fire, but found nothing that would interest him—the paper did not tell of the finding of any body in the ruins.

Hurrying to his office he used the telephone to find if the young lady had returned to her home, but the servant replied hesitatingly that she had not.

"And did Tom Harris come in last night?" he asked.

The servant replied that the young man did not show up at home, and she supposed that the young fellow was hunting for the young lady.

"Did you tell him about Miss Evelyn's leaving?" questioned Dick.

The servant replied that she had not seen Tom and therefore that she could not tell him of the young lady's disappearance.

"I suppose he didn't spend all night away from the house hunting for her," thought Dick as he hung up the receiver and turned to look for the number of the hospital.

Asking how Mr. Delong was, he received a response to the effect that the man was considerably improved, but that no visitors would be allowed to see him, on orders of the attending physician.

"Don't get to see him to straighten this thing out, and Harris' case comes up for hearing this morning," muttered Dick.

Looking over some papers which he knew needed attention in one of the civil courts that morning, he gathered them together and started out for the court-house. Here he attended to his business and then circled around to the police station to call on his client.

"I am worried this morning," said Mr. Harris as Dick

entered the cell and greeted the man cheerily. "Evelyn hasn't called yet, and she said she would be here early this morning to attend to some business for me."

"I suppose she will be here all right in a few minutes," said Dick pleasantly, hoping against hope that the man would not break now in this critical time.

"But she said she would be here soon this morning. What do you suppose can be the trouble?" asked the man. "Would you mind using the 'phone and asking her to come right away? I want that business attended to, and there is no one but she that can attend to it."

Here the boy was in a bad fix. What would he do? He would have to invent some lie to tell the man, for to tell him the truth now might mean the breaking of the entire case.

Then the plan instantly came to him as he walked down the corridor.

He might win the case, or get the preliminary set-off by announcing the abduction of this girl, thus showing that other agents were at work.

Going down to the office to perfect his plans, he thought for a few minutes and then came back to the cell, announcing the abduction to the man and telling him the whole truth of learning it the night before.

"My little daughter stolen! My little daughter stolen!" almost screamed the man as he staggered under the weight of the news. "What shall I do?"

CHAPTER VI.

ON TRAIL OF A MYSTERY.

Dick waited for a while for the man to get control of himself, but it seemed as if the burden would be too great for Harris to bear. He moaned and groaned as one who is in the greatest physical pain.

He tried to console the man by saying that he was on the track of the girl the night previous and that as soon as the preliminary trial was over he would again take up the matter, and that, in the meanwhile, the police should be told of the abduction so that they, too, could be placed at work on the case.

Dick went even further and presented to Mr. Harris his own side of the matter—how this abduction might lend to the prisoner's side of the case more strength in the statement that other agents had been at work and that he was himself now the victim of a conspiracy.

"I thank you, Mr. Dashington," answered Harris, straightening up after considerable effort. "I'll do just as you say and allow you to handle both cases any way you choose. I am completely in your hands and whatever you say will be law with me."

Dick accepted this statement with a nod of his head and told the man to make ready to go before the judge for the preliminary hearing.

Dick hurried below and went to the chief's office.

"Chief," as he hastily went to the chief's desk and spoke to the man, despite several others who were trying to get the chief's ear, "I have a case that demands instant attention."

At once the chief left the group and came over to Dick Dashington.

"Just as I thought yesterday when I called on you, it is evident to me there is a conspiracy against Harris," he started, and the police chief took more notice than he might otherwise have done. "To support my argument I have to report this morning that his daughter, Evelyn, was abducted from their house late yesterday evening, just after darkness fell, and that she has not been seen since. This seems to be a part of the conspiracy, and I want to ask the police department to take up the matter at once. All the information necessary can be obtained from the servants at the house, and the police may be able to find some trace of the girl before it is too late. In the meanwhile I understand that Delong is getting better and that the doctor may soon announce him as out of danger. I am going to ask for bail this morning for the prisoner on the report of the attending house physician of the hospital, and I want the police to help me. This is no ordinary case."

Dick was speaking rapidly and convincingly, for he knew that his time was short. A few minutes more would see the court called to order and it would be too late to make a move after the judge had called the court.

The chief asked for information about the abduction, but Dick could give him no idea. Again he told the chief to go to the house and see the servants for whatever information was needed. It was sufficient that the young lady had been stolen on the day before the trial.

"I can't think of letting Harris get away," said the chief. "Delong is not out of danger, and then the circumstantial evidence is too clear. We can't let him go."

Dick argued the matter for several minutes, but all to no avail—he could not move the chief to see the case as he saw it.

A few moments later the case was called by the clerk of the court, of which Shamus Casey was judge, and Dick stood before the police magistrate to make his statements.

"May it please the court, I should like to make some announcements before any action is taken in this case. The honorable prosecuting attorney will probably wish a postponement owing to the absence of certain material which he is seeking, and I would ask that the prisoner be allowed bail. My reasons are these: First, that the doctor at the hospital, who is now in this court-room, will probably announce that Delong is out of danger of death and the prisoner should not, therefore, be held pending the death of the man for a charge of murder. The second is that it is the belief of the counsel for the defense that a conspiracy is on foot against the prisoner, and his active energies will be needed to protect his family and his property. This morning it is reported that the daughter of the prisoner was abducted last evening from her home and no trace has so far been found. The police have been notified and it is hoped they will succeed in finding her."

Before Dick could proceed any further in his speech the judge interrupted with several quick questions, for the judge was one of that sort of men who think quickly and act right after they think.

Dick answered all the questions quickly and concisely, showing his aptness at understanding the law and his understanding of this particular case.

The chief fought against Harris being allowed bond, on the grounds that the doctor had not yet made his report. The prosecuting attorney asked for the statement and the

doctor said that Delong was really out of danger, practically, and that there would probably be no need of holding the man for a charge of murder.

"The prisoner will be allowed bail in the sum of five thousand dollars," announced the police magistrate.

Dick objected on the grounds that the charges would not call for or demand a bond of that size, but Casey was immovable on the point.

"The prisoner will give a check for the amount to the judge to be held as his cash bond for reappearance at whatever date is set for the trial."

This announcement created somewhat of a scene in the court-room, as Dick handed up the check which had already been written and left blank for the insertion of the figures of the bond.

"The prisoner is released in the care of his attorney, who will be held responsible besides the bond for his appearance in this court at this hour to-morrow morning," announced the magistrate.

"If it please the court, I should ask that the date be set for one day later, owing to the fact that the injured man may not be in condition to appear in this court at that time and it would be best to have the trial over with without any delays or postponements. May the prosecuting attorney agree with me?"

Charlie Sherley, prosecuting attorney, arose and asked for that postponement, and the judge agreed on the time—two days later.

"Let us go to my office immediately," said Dick, when the judge made the announcement and the prisoner, Harris, was free to go.

They hurried across to the little office of Dick Dashing-ton, and here started an examination into the evidence to see what should be done.

"But my daughter! My daughter!" moaned the man.

"The police will handle that, Mr. Harris. Don't you see that you can do nothing just now, and that the police are better equipped than you or myself for finding the girl? I am satisfied that she is all right—what we have to do is to let the police find her. Brookdale isn't so large but what they will locate her before long."

Dick argued sensibly with the man for some time before Mr. Harris was brought to understand the situation.

Together they went over the matter, Dick asking many questions, all of them relating to incidents connected with the finding of the man two days previously in the office of Harris in the Mona Building.

"And now I want to ask you more particulars about your nephew, Tom Harris," went on Dick. "It seems that he came up to my office with your daughter yesterday and I found that he knew things which would be against you. I want you to answer some questions for me."

The man looked quickly at Dick and then nodded that he was ready.

"In the first place, how does it happen that this boy is in your charge and is at your house?" asked the young lawyer.

"He is the son of my dead brother," answered Harris. "I took him about two years ago, when he ran away from school and thought I would raise him."

"Has he any work to do? Does he work for any one?" asked Dick.

"He has had several positions in Brookdale, but owing to his hot temper he has not been able to hold them for any length of time. He tells me that his employers demand things of him which he will not do and that he cannot work with them."

Dick accepted this much, and went on with the questions:

"When he has no position he is in the habit of coming to you for money, is he not?"

"Yes, that has been the way since he has been with me. He has asked for more money than usual lately, and he and I had some words day before yesterday morning when he asked me for one hundred dollars, claiming that he needed it to carry on a little option deal on some real estate. He wouldn't tell me about the property and so I would not let him have the money."

"Have you ever seen him under the influence of liquor?"

This question hit home, and the man looked sharply at Dick before answering:

"No, I don't think he is in the habit of drinking. I have never seen him under the influence."

"What time of the night does he usually come in?"

This was another question which hit home to Harris.

"He is usually rather late in coming in, but he tells me that he is calling on some young ladies, parties, receptions, and all that, and I have paid little heed to his comings and goings at night on that account, for being with the young ladies is all right, to my mind."

That is the way Dick looked at it—if the young fellow did that way. The company of young ladies of the better class was the finest kind for a young fellow, but Dick was not so sure on that score in the case of young Harris, and so he continued the questions:

"Would it be much of a surprise to you if you knew that he borrowed money from others at interest?"

Joseph Harris looked very sharply at Dick again and was some time in making a reply to the question.

"Yes, it would be a distinct surprise and a shock to me. Do you know that he has been doing that?"

Dick at once answered that he did not know of such a thing, that he was simply trying to learn what the uncle knew of the boy.

"Do you know whether Tom has ever done any gambling or whether he moves with a set which does gamble?"

All of these questions were pointed and there was no dodging their significance. Harris again looked sharply at the young lawyer.

"I do not think Thomas is that sort of a boy," he replied slowly. "I have never inquired in particular about his associates, but I had an idea that since he called on young ladies in the evenings he would not be likely to fall in with the class of young men who gamble and carouse."

That was all right for the uncle. He was reasoning all right, if his premises were good, thought Dick.

"Do you know anything about the gun which you picked up in your office when you found Delong lying there?" he next said.

Harris announced that he had never seen the weapon before.

And Harris also said that he had not owned or used a weapon for several years, and did not keep one about his office or his house.

"What became of the money which Delong brought up to your office and had while he was waiting for you to come?" asked the young lawyer.

Again Harris could not give a reply. He stated that he had not seen the money and only knew how much there was because it was the amount agreed upon in the morning.

"Did you notice any bands lying on the floor or the table beside the man when you found him—bands which probably held the money?"

"No, I cannot say that I did," answered Harris. "I was so excited at the time over finding Delong in my office in such a condition that I did not notice anything at all."

After several more questions Dick allowed Mr. Harris to go to his own office to attend to his business, and told him that he would be in communication with him as soon as there were any developments which were in his favor, or as soon as the police found out anything about Miss Evelyn.

With this the gentleman was gone and Dick had an opportunity of being alone to study over matters. To him there was a plain case against young Harris, but he could not prove it. That was just the trouble—circumstantial evidence, only in this case he could not lay his hands on the material evidence which would be necessary.

"Hello, Harry!" he called to young Harry Donald, as that boy was hurrying along the street. "What's the news to-day? Anything doing that will make the city sit up and take notice?"

Harry Donald was one of the friends of Dick who had finished the high school with him a couple of years previous to this, and who was now at work for one of the newspapers as a reporter, his aim in life being to reach the heights of a novelist and make the world bow at his feet.

Harry announced that he had his hands on a good story, but that he could not afford to let it loose.

"Come on, Harry, tell me something about it. You know I'd help you if I had the chance, and I think you might tell me something to get me out of the rut of law-books and court-rooms."

Dick was always in this jolly mood with his friends, allowing all his cases to go aside when he met the boys on the street.

They had stopped in front of a restaurant and Dick asked the boy to take a little bite with him, which Harry accepted.

"Come on, Harry, tell me the story. What's all this mystery?"

"Oh, I'm not sure about it yet," answered Donald. "I've just discovered a little clue and I want to work it up. Do you know about that fire down on the river-front last night? Yes? Well, the firemen found some fellow who fell out of the ruins just as the building caved in, and he was all cut up and looked bad. I believe there's something to it."

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE TRAIL OF TRAVIS.

Dick looked very much surprised over the news and then asked who the fellow was.

"I don't know who he was, but it seems that he jumped up all of a sudden and ducked out of there before the fire-

men could find out how he had gotten out of the building and what he was doing there. You see, the place was vacant and there oughtn't to have been anybody in there."

It was plain to Dick that Harry was willing to make a mystery of this strange man and his stranger appearance and disappearance.

"What do you suppose he was doing in there?" he asked.

"That's just what I'd like to know," answered Harry in a mysterious whisper. "He might be the fellow who set fire to the building, or he might have been one of the gang they say has been in there for several nights."

This is where the matter took on interest for our lawyer.

"Has there been a gang in the place?" he asked.

"Yes, I saw a man this morning who rooms on that same street—he works on the river—and he says he has seen two or three fellows going in there late at night and that he has seen lights in the second story several times."

"Did he say he would know any of the fellows?"

"He said he might be able to recognize one of them, but I don't know where to find the one. They must have set fire to the place, or maybe it got caught from their candle or whatever kind of light they used. I wonder what they did in there?"

That is just what Dick was about to ask.

"And the firemen said they would be able to recognize the fellow they saw last night?" asked Dick.

"No, they say they don't think they could, because his head was all covered up with dust and dirt and there was blood on the side of his face. It may be, you know, that these fellows tried to kill some one and he got out in time to save himself," suggested Harry.

Dick fell to eating his lunch and thinking of the matter, while Harry went on adding his suggestions, none of which happened to strike Dick as peculiarly illuminating, since he knew some of the matter for himself.

"What kind of a story are you going to write about it?" asked Dick.

Donald did not know the answer. He had been trying to calculate about what kind of a story he should write, but so far the answer had failed to come his direction.

"Well, if you learn anything more let me know, will you?" asked Dick as they went to the door of the restaurant, and Harry started off for his paper.

Dick returned to his office and used the telephone, still trying to learn if Delong was in shape so that he could talk. The officials at the hospital informed him that Delong was showing steady improvement, but that the doctors still refused to allow any one, even his most intimate friends, to see him as yet.

"And now I wonder what the police have discovered?" asked Dick of himself, rising in the middle of the afternoon and starting for the station.

"Well, chief, what have you learned about the girl?" he asked, finding Chief Manley Dorris reclining in his big office chair, smoking a very large cigar and looking the picture of perfect content.

"Hello, Dick, boy! Come in!" he called out as the boy entered. "Have a seat. The girl? We haven't found out anything yet that's any good, but we have something of a clue in a young fellow that was there last evening inquiring for her. He said he was a lawyer and the servant told him all about the case. What do you think of that?"

"I don't know as that is any awful mystery," answered Dick, smiling at the chief. "I'm the fellow, I suppose."

"Well, why didn't you report the matter to us at once?" asked Dorris.

"Too busy last night. If you had been as busy as I was right after I learned about it you wouldn't have thought about reporting anything, either. I told Harris about it this morning and then made the report to you as soon as I came downtown."

"But that's just where you did us wrong. We might have done something last night when the trail was fresh."

"What trail is that?" asked Dick in surprise.

"Why, we might have followed up that auto car when the thing's tracks were on the street plainly."

"That's what I did, and they led me into the next street and the next street was covered every which way with auto tracks and wagon and buggy tracks so that a bloodhound couldn't have followed that way."

"Oh, then, you were playing detective on your own hook, were you?" asked the chief, a slight sneer appearing in his tone.

"Judging from the fact that the police would not believe old man Harris' story when there were all sorts of evidence in his favor, I think I was justified in trying to locate things myself. What is the police department doing to-day? What has it found? Where is the girl? Where did she go when she was taken away? What do the men look like? How many were there? What was the number of the auto car? What was its color and size? Did it move east or west when it left the house?"

Dick's anger arose slightly when the chief attempted to make fun of him and his detective ability, and he fired these questions at the chief in a perfect rain.

"You don't suppose we can answer all those questions this soon, do you? Nobody else seems to be able to answer them. Can you give us the answer, and you were there in a few minutes after it all happened?"

"I got there a full half-hour after it happened, and caught the servant when she was so excited she had forgotten her own name," replied Dick.

"The disappearance of that girl was more than anything else what got him out this morning on bond, wasn't it?" asked the chief. "Any man in the same position might have figured that out ahead of time, mightn't he?"

So that was the position the chief was taking? Dick grasped the idea at once and aimed the next question directly at the chief.

"Because Harris gets out on a plea that he ought to be actively engaged in finding his daughter, the police are not going to work on the case and are going to let him find her the best he may, eh?"

"That's not what I am saying, Dashington!" exclaimed the chief, his feet coming from the top of his desk and his face reddening under the accusation of the young lawyer. "I'm not that sort. You ought to know me better than that. You're going the worst way to get us to help you in this case!"

"Well, as for that, chief, I am going the best way to find out something to help my client when his case comes to trial. I already have enough evidence to completely knock out the charges against him, and I can lay my hand

on the money—and it's not in the hands of Harris, nor never was in his hands, either!"

Dick was taking huge chances in making a statement of this kind. But he stopped only long enough to make an effect and then made an ambiguous statement which was calculated to make the chief sit up and take notice.

"The bands which were around the money were found under the foot of the policeman who bent over the body of Delong while he was lying there. Were those bands on the floor before the policeman stooped over?"

This was indeed a shot, and it struck fairly home. Dick knew that the bands were already on the floor, or that one of them was, but he was willing to let the chief hunt that fact down for himself and in the meanwhile be worried by the fact.

"What do you mean by that? Do you mean that my police took the money?" asked the chief quickly, rising from his seat and glaring at Dick.

"I don't mean anything in particular," quietly rejoined the young lawyer; "only I have some ideas of my own, and I might remark that that isn't all that I have learned by my detective work, either."

In uttering these words he rose from his seat and prepared to leave the office, but the chief stopped him.

"Wait a minute, Dick. I don't want you to leave with the wrong impression. We may as well work together on this case. There isn't anything to be gained by running away angry with me."

"I am far from angry, chief. I just dropped in to find out what you people had learned and I find that you haven't learned a thing. And you joked me about my following that auto, and seemed to think that I ought to play police, too. So I was just going to follow up the things I already know and then see what the end would be."

This indifference was not to the pleasure of the chief. He knew how to handle some people, but he had to confess to himself that this time he was handling a fellow who was too independent. So he changed his tactics and came about in a different way:

"I have had my men on the case all morning and they have not reported anything. As soon as they learn anything of any value I'll drop you a word by 'phone. How will that do?"

Dick replied that such an arrangement was perfectly satisfactory to him, and then he left the place.

"And now I'd like to know a little more about this Kentucky Real Estate Company and the kind of business it does. This fellow Travis let Tom have a little money. Why did he do that? Wonder how he is mixed up with Tom as a general thing?"

This he thought to himself and dropped into one of the drug-stores to look up the Kentucky Real Estate Company and then to look it up in Dun's agency book.

"Humph! This is interesting. The Kentucky Real Estate Company is a money-lending concern, which loans money to salaried people at small rates of interest. Seems to me I've met that kind of a thing before. They're the fellows who charge usurious rates and generally fleece a fellow, depending altogether on the character of the man who runs the business."

Our young lawyer thus soliloquized as he looked over the

reports and books and found the rating of Travis and the company he was representing.

"Now the chances are that Travis already knows I am on the case, but I am not so sure he knows me. Therefore, me for Travis' office and see what he knows."

Whereupon Dick sauntered easily to the Mona Building, took the elevator and came out on the floor on which Harris' and Travis' offices were located.

He found the gold-lettered door of the Kentucky Real Estate Company and walked boldly in, as if he knew precisely who he wanted and what he was doing.

At the desk, the main desk, for there were two, sat a hard-faced man of about thirty, his hair plastered back on his head, his nose very red and prominent. He glanced up as Dick entered and went on with some figuring he was doing.

"Tom Harris says to come over as soon as you can," blurted out Dick, taking the awful chances which he had been taking for the past two days, but in most of which he had been winning.

Travis looked up quickly at the young fellow, and then suddenly turned red, as he seemed to recognize the boy, though Dick never remembered of having seen Travis before.

"Where did you see Tom Harris?" he asked.

"You know where I saw him," smiled Dick. "I was coming this way and he told me to tell you he wanted you as soon as possible."

"I guess you're on the wrong steer, young fellow," answered Travis. "If Tom Harris wants me he knows where my office is. This is where I do my business."

"Well, I'm sure Tom would like to see you," remarked Dick, seeing that he must change his course right away and a pretty idea coming suddenly to his rescue. "You know that money he borrowed and paid back to you night before last or yesterday morning is getting him in trouble, because he paid it back too soon. That's the principal source of his trouble."

With this shot Dick quickly left the room, closing the door behind him, and wondering what effect the remark had on the fellow.

"I've just got it about figured down this way," he muttered as he took the elevator and started down the building, "that if young Harris got that money he paid Travis what he owed. If he paid Travis what he owed, then it's pretty certain he got that money. Either two and two are four, or four is the sum of two and two—it doesn't matter which. Now, if it's a fact that Travis was paid, then it's pretty certain that Travis knows where the money came from. If all that guessing is good, then my next guess is that Travis will get to where Tom Harris is some time soon."

So thinking, Dick stepped out of the building and made across the street to a news-stand, where he took up his watch for the coming of Travis. Of course, there was a telephone, but how did he know where to catch Harris over the 'phone, and was there a 'phone where he knew Harris was, if he knew?

These were some of the thoughts which came to the boy as he stood looking over papers and magazines, buying one and standing aside to read it a part of the time, while he kept one eye on the door of the Mona Building and watched for the coming of Travis.

It was a long wait. One hour went by, and then another. Then it struck Dick that Travis might have gotten out.

Going to a telephone he called up the Kentucky Real Estate Company, and when a voice answered that he was Travis, Dick started a sentence and suddenly hung up the 'phone in the middle of the sentence. He knew that Travis would think the central had cut them off accidentally. He had obtained all the information he wanted.

The sun was falling far into the west, lighting up the world in its glory, and still no Travis. Then, just when he was about to give up the wait, the man came out of the building and sauntered easily along toward the river-front.

"And now I'm on the trail—maybe!" exclaimed our lawyer boy.

CHAPTER VIII.

ATTACKED BY MASKED MEN.

Reaching the river street, Travis turned toward the south, paying no heed to passers-by, appearing to have a destination, but in no particular hurry to reach that place.

"I wonder where he's going to take me?" Dick thought, almost aloud.

But Travis showed him in a little while. The "real estate" man went along the west side of the street, now and then looking off toward the river, where the lights of tugs and small boats could be seen dancing lightly over the water, vari-colored, throwing their gleams in to shore and thus lighting up the river street so that Dick could see Travis even though a block intervened at most times.

They had traversed six blocks, by Dick's count, when Travis suddenly stepped into an areaway and disappeared.

Dick hastened his steps and reached the point, to discover two men standing back in the darkness conversing. Stopping for a moment, his mind worked out a plan instantly and he wavered on his feet, his head bowed low, and then with a couple of hiccoughs and some muttering to himself he staggered uncertainly away from the areaway, starting in the direction which he had been pursuing.

Instantly after passing away, Dick doubled back quickly and stood close beside the wall of the building, listening for voices down the dark passage.

"I heard him say he'd work late to-night to straighten up his business, and he told her to leave out all his books. He was still there when I left. He went over to the police station twice this afternoon, and——"

Dick strained his ears to catch those words, but they were whispered and were lost to him.

There was silence for a second or two, then the creaking of a door, a shaft of light gleamed along the passage, then quickly followed by darkness, a long wait, possibly several minutes, and the same creaking came again, followed by the long ray of light, the door slammed dully closed, and two men started toward the street.

Dick leaped to the edge of the sidewalk and fell behind a large box and some barrels which were piled there.

The two forms started back along the street by which Travis had come, and Dick peered out to see who they were.

"I wonder if Evelyn is in here," he muttered to himself as he saw the two forms go quickly along the street, and he calculated whether it were better to follow or to try to gain entrance to this building.

But a bird in the hand is far better than a covey that may be hidden in bushes, and Dick took up the trail of these two forms.

Steadily and surely they walked along the river street, going straight to the one from which Travis had come. Here a huge arc lighted the corner, the first they had passed either way, and Dick was able to recognize the form of Travis, even if he were a block ahead, but he did not know the other.

Hurrying so that they would not get away from him into some side street or some other areaway, Dick reached the corner just as the men passed the next street, so rapidly were they moving.

"Whew! Wherever they're going, they're certainly going!" he thought, his breath coming shortly from the quick dash he had made.

Dick crossed the street and saw the men walk into the Mona Building, one of them stepping toward the toilet-rooms of the lower floor while the other climbed the steps, the elevator having stopped at the close of business hours in the building's offices.

Still he was not able to recognize the fellow who was with Travis, but he had an idea that he was making a good guess.

Taking his stand again at the news-shop he waited a long half-hour for the coming of the two. At last they came out of the building, Travis and—Tom Harris!

"Just about the way I had it figured," thought Dick, watching which way the two would go. But they did not go. Instead, they crossed the street and entered a saloon which stood the second place below the store in which was ensconced our lawyer boy.

The reason now for Dick's remaining where he was, was based solely and entirely upon the hint which he had gotten from that half-sentence in the dark passageway back there by the river: that these fellows were waiting for some one who had some work to do on his books and would not be done until late.

So Dick waited, though impatiently.

Once he started to saunter along the street out of this news-stand, but he caught a glimpse of Travis in the doorway of the saloon a few doors distant and he ducked back and concluded to await their departure.

A half-hour passed away and then another. Then, as if in answer to a wish he had just made, a man came out of the Mona Building, stood there for a moment breathing in the cooler air of the outer world, and started up the street toward the main section of the city.

Our boy lawyer waited for the movement of the fellows in the next building, wondering if this were the man for whom they were waiting. It was. As the man reached the corner above the Mona Building two forms walked slowly past the news-stand, and Dick found himself very busy with a newspaper, holding it so high that none from the outside could recognize him.

"That means that I'm on the trail of something and only goodness knows what it is," he thought, laying aside the paper and going to the door to peer out.

"Joseph Harris continues on the even tenor of his way, though it is quite probable that he will go to the police station and ask the chief some questions," muttered Dick, keeping his place in the news-stand until the parties he was

following should get far enough ahead that he be not discovered.

Just as he had calculated, the elder Harris turned at the corner which led to the police station, and the followers took up a position at that corner to await his coming again.

Through Dick's mind there were flashing several ideas, but none of them could he crystallize into a method of action, for he did not know as yet why these two younger fellows were following Harris.

He was soon to learn. Harris came out of the station, swung along toward the main street and then started northward toward his own home, his handkerchief in his hand, showing that he was feeling grief at no news about his little daughter.

Harris walked at a good pace, taking him quickly out of the business section, and the hour was so late that few people were passed on the way.

Straight ahead he went, now reaching a part of the city which was thickly studded with trees, where the arcs, more distantly placed, shone but indistinctly through the trees.

Dick closed the distance between himself and the two young men as he saw this and recognized that he could make the move without danger.

Suddenly the two darted across the street a block away, right in the darkest section, where many trees lined the walks and the houses stood far back from the street.

"Something's going to happen!" exclaimed Dick, now changing his pace to a light dog-trot and closing the gap quickly. In a moment he had reached a point directly opposite and he saw two dark forms close quickly on the man across the street.

"Halt, there!" he heard the low tones of command, and Harris immediately stopped. Instantly there began a scuffle. Dick leaped across the street at his best pace, racing over the wide thoroughfare as silently as possible, reaching the sidewalk just where the fight was going on.

Harris was struggling with all his might, a wiry-built man of some strength, but the two younger men were plying weapons which they carried.

"Chug him in the head!" exclaimed the coarser voice of Travis, and just then Dick leaped at the fellow who was about to do the chugging.

Crack! A stiff blow went forward, catching the fellow on the shoulder and glancing to the side of the head.

Instantly the other fellow turned his attention on the new entry, and Dick found himself facing a much larger man who brandished a short club, a sort of billy.

Crack! Dick stepped in to the fellow with one step and sent a low blow toward his wind, reaching him and causing the fellow to double up with a grunt of pain.

Bang! A club fell across his shoulders and there was a dull pain which moved up and down, and he felt that one arm was useless, or almost so.

Dick stepped out of the range of that club quickly and turned to meet the attack. Just then the elder Harris found himself ready to fight, with these new odds in his favor, and sailed into the heavier man, while Dick found himself facing the fellow who had struck him across the shoulders with that club.

Ducking in true pugilistic fashion, for Dick had not forgotten his training at school, he darted under the uplifted

arm of the fellow and sent home a stiff blow on the lower chest which sent the fellow back several feet.

"Run! Get out, quick!" muttered the fellow whom Harris was fighting, and instantly the two assailants turned and dashed away up the street, Dick starting in pursuit. However, his wind was almost gone, his shoulder was in severe pain, and our boy lawyer found the fellows gained on him at every step. Then he hurried back to the older man.

"Is that you, Mr. Harris?" he asked.

Harris replied that it was and looked up to see who had helped him.

"Why, it's Mr. Dashington, I do declare! How did you happen to get here at such a time?"

"Been following you ever since you left the office. I had an idea that something of the kind might happen," was the reply of Dick.

"Who were they?" asked the elder man.

"They were masked, weren't they?" answered Dick. "Do you know who they were?"

"I haven't the slightest idea. And what could they want with me? They didn't ask me to give them any money, and I haven't any with me of any consequence. I wonder why they attacked me?"

That was the same question which Dick might have asked a moment later.

"Well, I think you are safe enough now to go on home," he commented. "I am going back to town and then home myself, I think."

"But I would like to know how you happened to be on the scene?" asked Harris, not willing to leave until he knew more of this.

"Just happened to be walking along across the street when I heard them tell you to halt. I knew then that something was wrong."

Dick was telling the truth. He had been across the street and he had heard the fellows tell Harris to halt.

"Well, it was mighty lucky for me, I suppose. I was just about gone when you got here and gave me a chance to fight one off by himself."

With this the elder man bade the boy good-night and started for his home, first, however, asking if there were any news about his daughter.

"Haven't you been to the police station to-day or this evening?" asked Dick.

"Yes, but they had no information. They don't seem to have been able to follow the girl at all," answered Harris, and again his handkerchief was brought into use.

Dick swung lightly along the street, going back toward the city, for he lived on the west side, and he wished to go back to the police station before going to his home.

Suddenly, while he was thinking deeply over the scenes of the evening, he heard a slight noise behind him. Leaping quickly to the side, toward the curbing, there came a swish of something through the air, and then a thud and a grunt as that something struck the ground behind him. Instantly he wheeled and threw his fists up, just as a huge body came rushing at him. It was too late to send a blow, but he was able to duck low and throw his weight at the legs of the fellow.

"Ugh!" came another grunt as the fellow struck him and fell over, sent forward by the momentum of his rush.

Instantly Dick straightened and sent a vicious swing around at the man, missing him and throwing himself right into the arms of another who was making for him.

Then there was a mix. Dick's mind did not forsake him, and neither did his fists. He sent them pounding into the fellow's stomach as fast as they could rain, each time bringing a grunt which told him that he was landing correctly.

Six or seven of these were sufficient. Just as the fellow weakened and fell away, Dick raised one foot and sent it crashing straight at the assailant, catching him on the shoulder as he was stopping and sending him into the street.

At the same time the other came at him, a small club swinging in the air. This was not what he wanted. Turning toward the business section, the direction he had been following, Dick leaped away at a good pace and started along the sidewalk as rapidly as his legs would carry him.

For several yards he could hear the patter of feet following, then they stopped and he looked back to see that he was not pursued. The fellow had evidently given up the chase.

Stooping low to the ground so that he might determine where the fellows were, he saw two forms go slowly across the street and then disappear from sight.

"I guess those were the same two fellows and they wanted to get even with me for butting in, eh?" Dick asked himself.

Again he stooped low to the ground and tried to determine whither they had gone. It was no use—they had disappeared.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FIGHT ON THE ROOF.

mand.

The idea which had been in Dick's mind during the entire time he had been following the two young men now came to the surface as he walked back toward town and tried to figure what it were best to do.

"Me for that place on the river-front and see what's there. These two fellows are playing the game together, and they're after old Harris for some other reason than simply the money he had on his person. They have that place down there, and I think I'll see why. It might be possible——"

The thoughts which followed were more of plans than anything else.

Hurrying past the police station he dropped in to see what had been learned of the abduction of the little Harris girl, but there was no one at the office who could impart the information he desired.

Out of here he hurried, and then along the streets in the upper part of town until he thought he was about at a point which would take him directly to the building on the lower street.

A very few minutes more saw him on the river-front street, searching for the place and watching for the coming of the two young fellows who had attacked him.

"It may be that they beat me down here while I was at the station," he thought, "but that doesn't matter much. I'm going into the place if there's any way of getting there, and I'm going to see what they do and what they say."

Dick's mind was determined on that point. In some

vague way he seemed to think that all his case was crystalized at this particular point, and he was going to make every effort to bring everything to the surface this very night.

"The trouble with me is that I think a lot of things but I can't prove them," he muttered. "I've got to find some way of proving what I think and then old Harris will get out easily enough—maybe.

"In the first place the chances are that I can't get into the place through the areaway, because it will be guarded. In the next place I don't know whether these two fellows are here yet or not, and I don't know how much trouble I'm going to poke my nose into."

Walking slowly along the street, keeping an eye for any one who might be watching, he saw that the street was almost empty and that no one was close enough to that areaway to see him.

Slipping into the passage he groped along until he saw a small chink of light showing from beneath a door.

Was this the place? Was the door unlocked? Was there any one within?

These were the three successive questions of which he wished he knew the answer.

But Dick was determined to learn the answers. This was no time for waiting. Now was the time for action.

Putting his hand on the knob of the door he gave an easy turn. That much was easy enough. Any knob will turn. Slowly, steadily he pulled, after the knob was turned to the limit, and—surprise of all surprises! the door came open! Slowly, still more slowly he brought the heavy door her for, breathing not at all and listening for some one to move or to cry out who he was.

No noise came. This was luck indeed, unless—unless some one were waiting within for him to enter.

Looking quickly along the passage and seeing nothing to stop him, he slowly pushed his head around the end of the door and peered within. There, on a box some distance from the door, was a candle, burned low, and sputtering in its candlestick of melted tallow.

No one was in sight. The room was a small one, and there were two doors, one on each side, leading out of it.

Slipping his body quickly through the door he pulled the heavy thing behind him, standing there quietly with his hand on the inner knob while he waited for some sound which would tell him of the presence of others.

It took but a moment to step across to the box and whiff out the candle at a single puff. Now he stood breathlessly in the darkness, not knowing which way to turn, but sure that he knew the location of the door.

For several moments he stood irresolutely, and then moved across to the wall on one side in which there was a door leading out of the room into the main portion of the building.

Opening this slightly he again listened. No noise came to him. Stepping through he found that he must be in a large room, at least the impression was that.

By this door, when he had closed it quietly, he stood for several minutes again, this time to listen for noises and to accustom his eyes to the darkness of the place.

Away in the distance was a stairway. This he discovered after his eyes opened wide in the pupils and the dim light

of the river lamps filtered through the front windows of the old place.

"Guess I'll just make a try for that stairway," he muttered, and suited the action to the words.

Quietly he made his way across the floor, stopping now and then as the boards creaked and groaned under his weight.

All the unknown noises of the quiet night came to him now, added to the mysterious noises of an empty building, the scratching and running of rats and mice, and the purr of the wind as it issues through a place from somewhere, some undiscoverable place.

Up, up, up, he stepped, slowly and softly, one foot going ahead and then waiting for a noise to answer him.

Reaching the top he stuck his head sneakingly above the level and peered out to see what the place was like.

A large room, something like that below, greeted him, and he could see again the river lights coming through the broken windows of the front.

What was that? Was it a light? Were those voices?

He looked and listened, quite sure that he heard voices away over there at the side of the room, where he saw a chink of light coming out from around a doorway.

Again he spent moments of waiting and watching, and then slipped up the steps to the top, along the floor toward the light, and reached the door without being stopped.

"Shut up, now! No more of that lip!" came words from within.

Dick bent lower to the door to listen.

"But I would like to have a drink of water," murmured a voice inside, and Dick almost fell to the floor with the heavy beating of his heart and the sinking sensation he had within him.

It was the voice of Evelyn!

"I gave you one drink—that's all you get! How much do you want? Do you think I can go around this place getting you a drink of water? You just wait until the boss gets here and he'll give you all the water you want."

At first Dick had thought the voice that of a man. Now he was quite sure it was that of a coarse-voiced woman.

"I'll tell them about you," whimpered the voice of the girl. "You've got me so bound up here that I can't rest, and I can't breathe without it hurting me!"

Had her bound inside there, eh? and so tightly that she could not breathe!

"What's that you say? Get impudent to me, will ye? Getting impudent to your betters, eh? I'll just give you another taste of this cowhide!"

In a whining tone, not unlike the low, mad whine of an angry dog, came these words from the person who was on watch.

"Please, please don't! I'll not ask for anything else! Please, please don't beat me again!"

The girl was pleading with the keeper not to be whipped. This was enough. It was plain that the keeper, man or woman, was about to beat the girl.

Dick's blood rose to the boiling point at these words of pleading from the lovely little girl whom he had met but twice and for whom he had taken such a liking.

Placing his hand on the knob of the door he tried it—it fell back easily from the jamb.

Jerking it suddenly open a flood of light fell upon him

from the candle within, and he saw Evelyn lying on the floor in the corner of the room, ropes tied about her, while an old hag, bent and doubled with age, was raising a cow-hide whip to lash her.

With a bound he leaped across the small room, grasped the arm which held the whip and brought it quickly down.

Instantly there was a dull-voiced scream and a series of groans as the old woman struggled to lift the whip at Dick. Then she was taken with a fit.

With a groan and a yelp like that of a whipped dog the old hag fell to the floor, while Dick's hand went to his pocket for a knife.

Spying one lying on a box near the corner where the girl was tied he grabbed it up and severed the ropes which bound her at a single sweep of the sharp instrument.

Just then the old hag struggled to her feet and was reaching into her skirts, as if for a weapon.

A scream of the girl attracted Dick's attention to her, and the boy leaped at her in his fury and bore her to the floor on the instant.

The old woman lay still, while the boy jumped up and grabbed the girl as she got limply to her feet.

Just then there was a running of feet across the floor outside, and two masked faces appeared at the door as Dick reached for a chair, a rickety old chair, which stood in the center of the room at the feet of the woman.

Lifting up the chair he threw it with terrific force straight at the faces of the two masked men.

With a cry of rage the men leaped back as the chair flew through the doorway. Dick was desperate.

Jumping forward our boy lawyer grabbed the heavy door, shot it closed, and reached for the bolts. Slipping these quickly across he found that the door was securely locked.

Now what was he to do? Locked in this room with the old hag and the girl he was trying to save, with two men outside beating and hammering against the door, pounding on it in all their fury for entrance.

Turning to greet the girl and to help her in some vague, indefinite way, Dick spied a ladder standing in the corner opposite. A glance up that ladder—and freedom!

He saw where it led—into a scuttle hole. Was that the way out of this place?

Instantly he gathered the girl in his arms, asking her to throw her arms about his neck, and started up the ladder.

Below them the two men were pounding and crashing against the door, which was slowly coming from its hinges. They were combining forces in regular charges against the heavy closure, and it would soon give way before them.

Up the ladder he scaled, his head against the scuttle covering. It moved at his push against it.

Quickly he shoved his head and shoulders through the opening, and there breathed the free air of the outside.

It took but a moment to push the girl through the hole, then to drag himself up, and then—then the door crashed in and with a yell of rage the two men darted for the foot of the ladder, jerking it away from the scuttle in an attempt to precipitate him to the floor.

But his grip on the outside panels was strong and he quickly pulled his body through the hole. The ladder banged back against the scuttle hole, he heard it scraping as it reached its balance hurriedly, and then one of the men leaped up.

Reaching over he grabbed the scuttle covering and threw it down over the hole with a heavy crash, just as one of the heads was coming up.

There was a cry of pain and a heavy falling within. One of the fellows had toppled back when he was struck with the thing.

The girl was on her feet, and Dick reached for her hand to lead her quickly away from the place.

Darting across the roof, dodging some wires which were stretched from one building to another, he reached the edge of the place and looked down. This was the wall where the passage was built in—it was too long a leap for the next roof!

Grabbing her hand eagerly again he started for the opposite side.

This was the place. It was but a small leap to the next roof, which was a little lower, and they would be away to safety, or, at least, to some safer place than this.

Looking back he saw the scuttle covering fly from its place, a head came out of the hole—one of the men was after them!

"Can you jump across there?" he asked the girl.

But she was too limp—he saw that and would not have her make the leap.

Gathering her in his arms he started to make the bound. Balancing, he stood on the roof edge and looked at the short distance between this and the next building. Could he—then he suddenly knew that the man was racing after him. A plan quickly came into his head.

"Stand here! When I say jump, you jump!"

The girl was on her feet on the very edge of the building.

"Jump!" cried Dick in a quick, low tone of command, and at the same instant he gave her a push which sent her flying across the space, and she landed on the other building.

CHAPTER X.

THE ESCAPE FROM THE ROOF.

On the very edge of that building with a narrow passage yawning between, down which he might go at any moment to his death on the hard pavement below, Dick faced the fellow who was charging at him.

The masked one swung a heavy blow at Dick just as he turned, but the boy succeeded in dodging, and at the same time sending his weight forward so that a blow would not topple him from the building.

Coming up quickly with an uppercut which landed lightly on the fellow's stomach, bringing forth a groan and another downward swing of his heavy fist which hit Dick's shoulder, the boy rushed under the man's arms and then rushed back at him, now having the fellow at the disadvantage of fighting on the edge.

The lights from the boats in the river twinkled up and lighted the scene indistinctly, but their eyes were accustomed to the darkness now, and each was fighting hard.

Dick stepped in toward the fellow and sent out a stiff blow with his right, aiming it at the fellow's face. A counter swing sent the blow glancing off, and Dick almost lost his balance, so stiffly had he sent the blow forward.

Instantly, however, he regained his feet and sent an upward swing in the manner of an uppercut, landing this time

on the fellow's chest, just as he reached into his rear pocket for a weapon.

With a bound the boy shot his body forward and reached for that arm. It was too late. Out came the hand, a big revolver showing in the semi-light, and Dick reached for it.

Bang! The fellow tried to raise it to bring it on a level with Dick, but the boy's movement at the arm deflected the bullet, which went flying into the air.

Here was a dangerous man to handle.

With his other hand he sent out a quick blow at the fellow's face which struck fairly on the nose.

The heavier man groaned at this, and Dick released his left hand quickly, at the same time sending it upward into the man's face with another vicious uppercut. This blow landed glancingly, and in that instant Dick swung his right fairly at the fellow, swinging it directly into his face with powerful momentum.

With a groan the fellow staggered, tried to regain his balance, and Dick reached for his coat-tail, saving him from toppling into the yawning chasm between the two buildings.

Leaving go quickly he smashed his right on the fellow's face with a stinging shot, sending the fellow staggering again under the awful force of the blow and the pain which came from it.

Bounding forward Dick went across the space between the two buildings and reached the girl's side. She was standing at the edge of the chasm watching the fight and shuddering with fear for the young fellow who had come to her rescue.

"Come on! We must get out of this!" commanded the young lawyer, grabbing her around the waist and urging her forward to a scuttle which he saw in the center of the building.

To this they raced, and Dick stooped to try it. It was fastened from the inside. Luckily, it was not covered with tin.

There was no time to parley or to ask questions—no time to plan for the next move. Raising his right foot he sent it smashing on the scuttle cover, and there was a slight splintering within as the wooden thing gave way. Another downward smash of his foot brought more splintering, and there was a small hole. Still another quick smash made the hole larger, and he stooped quickly and pushed a hand inside. Finding the hooks at the first trial he slipped them, straightened and pulled the scuttle cover away.

"In here! Get down, quick!" he commanded, his tones low but full of the intensity of the situation.

At the same time he saw the man on the other building leap across the space and start for him, and the second was coming across the roof from the scuttle through which they had escaped.

Grabbing the girl's skirts so they would not catch, he pushed her down through the scuttle, holding her by the shoulders while her feet found the ladder which ought to be standing there. Just as her head disappeared the leader of the two men came across the roof toward him.

Dick turned to show fight. The man's weapon was raised as he rushed forward, and the boy made ready to dodge when he saw the weapon come to its level.

The man did not fire instantly, but came on at the boy, and Dick suddenly shot his body forward in a long, low tackle, as football players do on the field, taking the man

fairly at the knees and bringing him to the roof on top of him.

Instantly he rolled over, scrambled to his knees, and reached for the weapon which the fellow had dropped as he fell.

Both made a grab for the revolver at the same time, but Dick's reach was the quicker of the two, and he obtained the weapon, the man grabbing his coat just as he tried to stagger to his feet.

Crack! That was the feet of the second fellow as he leaped across the space and made this roof. Dick gave a quick twist out of the fellow's clutches, but it was unsuccessful.

Like a flash he threw back his arms, gave his shoulders a shrug, and the coat slipped from off his back, the man falling backward as the boy got out of the wearing apparel.

Turing quickly he raised the gun and fired point blank at the coming man. Bang! bang! Two shots he fired, sending both of them low, toward the man's legs.

With a cry of pain the fellow fell to the roof, and Dick turned on the man who was nearest.

Swinging the coat about his head the man lurched forward at Dick, and attempted to throw it in a manner which would entangle the boy or throw him off from his guard.

Dick leaped back and like a dart from a catapult he leaped at the fellow, striking him on the side of the head with the barrel of the weapon and sending his other fist directly into the man's shoulders.

So quickly did the charge come that the fellow fell back, his feet struck the scuttle-top which lay by the side of the hole, and he fell on his back, Dick throwing a knee into the man's stomach as his own weight followed the man to the roof.

There was a heavy grunt and the fellow's breath went out of his body.

Quickly reaching his feet, the weapon still in his hand, Dick reached out for his coat, grabbed it loose from the fellow's grasp and sat down on the edge of the scuttle hole, slipping his feet around for the ladder, and then scampered down as he reached the rounds.

He might have pulled the scuttle-top over the hole, but there was no time for that. To get away was the principal thing now.

"Where are you, Evelyn?" he asked quickly, and the girl answered from out of the darkness.

"We've got to find the way out of here quick!" he muttered, reaching out for the girl's hand and then leading the way to the center of the large room, lighted faintly by those friendly lights from off the craft out in the river.

"Where is that stairway? There ought to be one!" he continued to mutter, releasing his hold and looking around the room in a search through the darkness for the stairs which would lead them to safety.

"Wait right here and I'll find them," he ordered, walking away hurriedly and seeking along the sides of the walls.

"Here they are! Can you find me? Come over here!" he called out in a low, tense tone, and the girl ran across the floor toward the boy whom she could see limned against the light through the window.

Just as they started down the steps there was a loud clatter, and Dick looked back to see a man lowering himself down the ladder from the scuttle.

"Here he comes after us again!" he muttered, pushing the girl on more rapidly down the steps and waiting for a moment to see what the fellow would do.

The girl had reached the bottom, and Dick knew now that they must find a way out. Gliding quickly down the steps he reached the lower floor, and turned to look along the large empty room of the old building.

"Let's try those windows!" he exclaimed, and the girl ran across the floor at his side as he raced for the front openings into the street.

But there was no need. In the center of the front stood a huge door. Quickly he reached his hands for the locks, sliding them along over the heavy door in search for the bolts that held it in place.

Above him he heard the feet of the man who was searching for the stairs.

"Here it is! Now to get it!" and he grunted as he pulled with an unavailing jerk at the rusted lock.

Two or three more pulls and he felt the bolt give, then slide a little, and it was out of the hold in the side of the jamb.

Grabbing the door quickly he jerked it open, and as the huge thing swung back on its rusted hinges, groaning and creaking, he pushed the girl out, just as the man came tumbling down the stairs, yelling at them to halt.

Into the street they ran, Dick taking the girl's hand and racing toward the north, knowing this was the way to more quickly reach that portion of the city where he could find protection in case it were needed.

But no one followed. When he had run for some distance he turned to look back, but no one was in sight.

"Here is the way to town. Now we'll get up there as quick as we can and see what's to be done," he muttered in a glad tone, clasping the girl's hand a little more tightly and feeling an answering pressure that made his heart beat more quickly, that made the blood surge to his face, he was sure.

"Great goodness, it's midnight!" he exclaimed as he looked up at the tower in the distance and saw both hands pointing to the hour of twelve.

"And the cars have stopped running!" said the girl.

"It's a cab for ours, I reckon," he remarked, pulling out his own watch to compare the time and finding that the tower clock and his own were pointing to the same hour.

It took but a few moments to find one of the cabs which loaf the streets of the average town all night, and they climbed into it.

"Drive to the police station," he ordered, and the girl asked him why he was doing this, saying she wished to go home, and not bother her father at this hour of the night.

"Your father is at home, Evelyn," he said, using her first name in the friendliest fashion, forgetting that he had only met her twice before.

The girl gave out an exclamation of joy at this news, and then repeated her question as to why he was going to the station.

But she was soon to know. The cab drove up to the station and Dick leaped out just as the chief was entering the building.

"Chief! Come here, please!" and the chief turned back to see who was addressing him in this peremptory fashion.

"Why, it's you, Dick! What are you doing out at this time of night?"

"Here's the girl, chief. She's safe and sound, and I want you to send a bunch of police down on the river-front. I found the place where they had her, and those fellows are there yet, if they don't get away before the police get there."

He quickly told the chief where the place was, and Dorris turned and gave his orders to two men who were standing at the door. Like a flash the two men leaped away and started on the run for the river-front, while Dick ordered the cab homeward to the girl's house.

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN THIEVES FALL OUT.

"My little girl! My little girl!" Joseph Harris called out in a spasm of joy and delight as he beheld who it was that came at this unseemly hour of the night and knocked for admittance to his home.

Father and daughter went into each other's arms, and tears filled Dick's eyes as he viewed the scene from the front steps of the house.

"Mr. Dashington, how can I ever repay you? How can I ever repay you? You have brought me back the happiness I thought I had lost! I want to do something for you!"

The man was almost hysterical in his delight at seeing the girl.

Dick could only stammer that he had done nothing out of the usual, that it was no more than any other man might have done.

"Won't you come in and stay the rest of the night?" the man asked.

"No, thank you, Mr. Harris. I think I shall take the cab and go home."

In a few moments more he entered the cab and asked to be driven back to the police station. He desired to know whether the police had found the fellows for whom he had sent them.

In his pocket rested the weapon he had wrested from the fellow on the roof, and he took it out to examine it. There were yet two shells unfired, and he fixed the weapon so these two would fall next.

"I don't suppose I'll ever need the thing any more, but there's no telling about anything any more. This case is awfully tangled up when one can't land the evidence he wants. I forgot to ask Evelyn if she knew the fellows who were behind those masks. I know them, but that doesn't do any good."

He fell to muttering to himself as he sat back in the cab and rocked to and fro as the vehicle rattled roughly toward town.

Out at the police station he leaped and ran in, asking the cabbie to wait a few minutes. The chief was in his office.

"Have you got them yet, chief?" he called out as he burst through the door and found the chief ensconced in his big arm-chair, calmly smoking one of those comfortable-looking fat cigars.

"Nothing yet, Dick. But say, Dick, boy, how did you find them? Where was she? How did you get on the trail?" asked the chief.

"Didn't I drop a remark early this morning that I was

going to find her and that the police weren't working fast enough to suit me? Don't you know I've only got one more day to get enough evidence to stop these charges against Harris?" Dick replied.

"Well, if you keep up at this rate I guess you'll have the evidence if things are like you think they are," answered Dorris.

"Things are just about like I think they are," replied Dick smilingly. "But I'd like you fellows to lay your hands on those two fellows who caused me so much trouble. Gee whiz, chief! you don't know what I've been through!"

Dick wished to make the occurrence appear light, but at the same time he wanted the chief to know that these two fellows were dangerous and that they would have to be handled without gloves.

The chief asked some questions about how Dick found the trail of the fellows, but Dick dodged and evaded all such questions and stuck to the urgings to get the fellows at once.

Just about this time the two policemen entered the office and reported that they had found no one and that nothing seemed to be wrong in that section of the city.

"There's an exhibition of the efficiency of your force!" exclaimed Dick, his temper almost getting away from him when these two stalwarts reported nothing wrong in that section of the city.

The policemen looked darkly at Dick, but the boy went on:

"It's mighty funny that they couldn't find anything when there's every evidence down there. Come on with me and I'll show you all sorts of evidence of something wrong, as you call it. Did you go into the buildings? Did you see the scuttle holes all uncovered? Did you find chairs and boxes scattered around to show there had been a scuffle? Did you find some candles lying about on the floor? A nice lot of police who are afraid to go into a building at the dead of night and see what's wrong! I'll show you what's wrong! Just come on with me!"

The boy was almost angry now, and he was showing the chief what he thought of these police.

"I think I shall take the report of my men," answered the chief, slightly nettled at these sentences and expressions of the young lawyer.

"All right, sir! Take their report! Their report sounds like a bunch of fellows who are afraid to hunt for things! The idea of saying they could find nothing wrong! What is 'nothing wrong'? Did they look for anybody or anything down there?"

Dick stalked across the room and back again, his hands shoved deeply in his pockets, his grimed face red with the temper which was rising to the surface again at this change in the chief.

"You keep your men here and let others do the work of policing this town and maybe they'll do better work. I have to go out and find a girl who is reported to the police as stolen, and I find her in a den in the middle of the river section, and then the police can't find anything wrong when there are a hundred things down there to show that something has happened that is wrong!"

Despite the fact that the chief was angry, too, at these short, sharp words of the young lawyer, he kept his tongue and waited for Dick to fume and fret until he was done.

"Keep your police uptown here, waiting for thieves and pickpockets and scoundrels to come in and arrest themselves! Maybe they'll protect property better that way than going around the real dens of criminals and finding something that is wrong!"

With these parting words the young lawyer walked out of the station and ordered his cab to leave, paying him for the work he had already done.

"Fifteen cents between me and starvation! Isn't that a pretty pickle for a rising young lawyer?" and he looked dolefully at the three nickel pieces which reposed calmly and quietly and coolly in the palm of his right hand. "Back to thy hiding-place, thou sons of dollars that are spent, and we'll see if we can't add something to your company ere the world grows older and more wicked," he muttered as he put the three nickels back into his pocket and started slowly down the street.

"Now why on earth did I order that cab to leave when I ought to be going home?" he asked himself. "He would never have known that I didn't have enough to pay him, and I would have been at home and he would have taken whatever I offered. I'm a fool of the first water, without a flaw, perfectly cut, and all the other nice things that can be said!"

Walking into a restaurant, Dick pulled out the three nickels again and calmly surveyed them.

"I will spend two of you for a sandwich and a cup of coffee. Then will I be wealthy still, for I will have a whole five-cent piece to keep the wolf from crawling under my door and eating the warm atmosphere inside."

He ordered the sandwich and the cup of coffee, eating the sandwich very slowly and wondering what he should do. He might go home, but the trouble was that these two fellows were roaming loose around town, and he did not like that at all.

"If I only knew where to find them I think I'd go after them, and then get the police afterward. I wonder if the police would have sense enough to arrest them if I'd find them?"

The policemen were still worrying him. Suddenly an idea came to him.

"I wonder if those fellows might not still be around the old place. They say that criminals come back to the place where they have done wrong, and that if you wait long enough they'll show up. Now I wonder if they'll do that little trick?"

This meant that he was about to make up his mind to traverse the distance between the restaurant and the river-front on a search for the fellows.

"The delightful part about this business is that I know who they are, and no one else does. That is, I guess I know who they are. My suspicions are so big that they scare me. If they are the fellows I think they are then all I have to do is to spot them somewhere and watch where they go."

Dick saw his face in a looking-glass of the restaurant and then began another soliloquy as he looked:

"Dick Dashington, you are a perfect picture of a crook yourself. You might hie your way to the river-front and mix with the criminals, but your face would make you appear suspicious. You are an ugly brute, but you have more sense than a policeman."

He smiled to himself as he muttered this, and walked out

of the restaurant not knowing quite what to do. He knew his mother would be wondering why he did not return, and he knew that he had failed to call her up in the late afternoon and say that he would be late coming home.

Some intuition, something unknown within, something which did not need leading but which itself led him, started him toward the river.

In a few minutes he found himself creeping silently along the street down which he had been several times that night, his eyes watching for the old building in which he had found the girl.

"Humph!" he muttered. "Here I am down here again, hunting for trouble, and the chances are that the police are right—they've gone."

Just then he caught sight of another form further along the street and he slunk into a stairway to watch this other fellow. There were two of them!

Slowly these other two came along the street and turned into the passageway across the street, the passage to the old building in which he had been that night.

"My hunch is a good one. They're back again. Couldn't help themselves. Had to come back just once more after they saw the police were out of the way."

He heard the creaking of the door as it opened over there in the passage and then the light slam as the thing swung closed after them.

Here was the chance. He would call the police and then go into that place and hunt for them.

Darting out of the stairway he went hurriedly along the street, keeping in the dark as best he could, reaching an old tumble-down restaurant which doled out goods to the rivermen and their ilk along the river at the late hours of the night.

"Hello! Is that the chief? ——— This is Dick Dashington! ——— Can you send two men down to that same place right away? ——— Yes, they're here! ——— Tell them to come along and I'll be around there somewhere. Those fellows are there right this minute! ——— Just got here!"

This done he left the place and darted back along the street again.

This time he was more certain of his movements. His mind was firmly made up to find these fellows and to land them. He needed them in his business, as he afterwards said, and he was surely going to land them this time.

Sneaking to the passage he crept along that dark place and found the door. Pushing easily on it he entered the place, closed the door and then waited for some noise from within.

Nothing disturbed the awful stillness inside the place.

"Those fellows'll be getting here and I won't be any better off," he thought, pushing through one of the doors which he found by groping about, and starting across the broad floor toward the stairway, the location of which he remembered easily enough.

"Now to get up here, and I guess I'll find them in that little room," as he started quietly up the steps and reached the top, where he poked a head above level and saw a small shaft of light from under the door.

"Must have fixed up their blooming door after they broke it in," he thought, waiting for a moment to see that no one came out of the place.

Then he quietly slipped across the long floor toward the door and heard a hum of voices from behind.

"I want half of it or I'll peach!" exclaimed the coarser voice, that of the fellow who had followed him farthest.

"You don't get half, Travis. That was my haul and you've got nothing to do with it. Besides, this leg is going to give trouble and I'll have to think about taking care of it. That fellow almost got me in a bad place. Just suppose those pellets had got me fair!"

Dick also recognized this voice. He had heard it several times before, and was quite sure he would not be mistaken.

"That's got nothing to do with the coin. You know what I know, and I want half of it or I tell the cops. That's my end of the game, and you've got to come across. One thousand is enough for you, anyway. You don't know how to take care of coin."

Travis, as the second voice had addressed him, was after one-half of some haul which the other had made.

"But, Travis, I've had all the trouble and all the expense. Who paid for the machine? I did. Who took the chances on that fellow Delong? I did. Who stays here all day and watches over things? I do. Who got winged to-night by that idiot of a shyster? I did. I've given you five hundred—that's enough!"

But it did not seem to be enough. Travis was not going to be satisfied.

"All right, you take the consequences. How nice you'll look behind the bars for all this business! You'd make a pretty spectacle! I've said my last—give me one thousand or I tell!"

With this there was a stirring of a chair or a box, and Dick heard the fellow get to his feet. It would not do to get caught. He crawled quickly away toward the windows, lying on the floor in his progress.

Suddenly there was a low cry and then a scuffle in the little room.

"Peach on me, will you?" yelled the younger voice, and then came a heavy fall, as something hit the door, and the heavy closure, weakened before from the onslaughts, fell outward, the two men tumbling over with it.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

The younger man was on top, as Dick could see by the light which fell on the two struggling men from the little candle in the room.

One of them was Travis, for he had heard the name—and the other was Tom Harris. Harris was raising a weapon to slug the under man when Dick leaped forward at the two of them.

"Up with your hands, both of you!" he commanded sternly, throwing his weapon to a level and standing just outside of the bar of light which came from the room.

Harris gasped and tried to scramble to his feet, turning his weapon in the direction of the speaker.

"Drop that gun or I'll fill you full of lead!" came the low tones from the boy lawyer, and the gun which Harris was brandishing fell to his side.

"Lay that gun on the floor and walk away from it five paces. Keep your distance or you drop. Bill, you and Jack keep your guns on these fellows and we'll take 'em

right away." Dick was speaking as if he was backed up by others, and Harris dropped the weapon to the floor and obeyed the words of the boy.

"Travis, you lay right where you are, or I'll take pleasure in plugging you right now."

"If those police would only come on," thought Dick, wondering where they were, why they were so long about their work, and whether they were coming at all.

So they stood for a long minute, Dick trying to figure out what was best to do.

"Jack, keep your gun leveled at these fellows from where you are, and I'll just get that gun. It looks so pretty out there!"

Dick was certain of keeping up the deception. To have let them know he was alone right now would mean trouble. When he delivered this order to his imaginary partner he stepped easily forward, his gun dropped to his side very confidently, and picked up the weapon which was lying where Harris had dropped it.

"You, eh?" gasped young Harris as he caught sight of Dick in the light of the candle.

"Yes, it's I," responded Dick, smiling pleasantly. "Thought I'd drop back and pay a little social call. Just brought along two others to keep me company, because they said they'd like to see you and Travis. Where's the old woman?"

Dick poked the Harris revolver into his pocket and stood there in the light of the candle, fingering with his own gun and looking at the two men, Harris and Travis.

"That's none of your business!" muttered Harris.

"Oh, well, Thomas, it doesn't matter much where she is. What made you fellows set fire to that place last night, anyway? Did you think I was going to stay in there till it burned down?"

Again there was muttering on the part of young Harris, but Dick only continued to smile and turned to look at Travis.

"He didn't hurt you much because you wanted that thousand, did he?" he asked the coarse-looking fellow. But there was no reply. Travis was looking into the darkness where those other two confederates of Dick's might be, and was trying to accustom his eyes to the darkness in that direction.

"Travis is trying to see you fellows, Jack!" called out Dick, looking over in the same direction and speaking exactly as if the imaginary ones were really there.

Down below there suddenly came a tramping of feet and heavy voices.

"Thank goodness, they are coming!" thought Dick, wondering how these fellows would accept this.

Aloud to the two men he said:

"Some more of the fellows coming up here to help us. Guess we'll all be able to take you along. We're not going to all this trouble on your account, but we kind of thought the old lady would be along, and you know a woman is ever so much harder to handle than a man."

The easy manner in which he spoke, the confidence which he expressed, was what won his position for him and kept the two fellows from charging at him. Dick knew this and held to his ease of manner, for it was his strongest and safest point.

Up the steps came the tramp of feet, and then, like a

searchlight from off the bow of some great man-of-war, a bar of light gleamed from the stairway and fell directly on the entire scene.

"Hello, Dick! Holding the fort by yourself, eh?" called the chief's voice as he took in the situation at the first glance.

Alone! Holding the fort alone! The words struck home to the two prisoners and there was a low growl from the man on the floor as he started to rise.

"Just stay where you are, Travis. Jack and Billy over there in the dark might shoot you. Be careful what you do!" Dick was smiling broadly at the fellow's anger at being thus trapped and held by the young boy.

"Chief," he called to the police as they came across the floor, "just slip the bracelets about these two fellows and we'll go through them. You know I've a hunch that they have something I want very much by to-morrow morning."

Tom Harris was standing a little to one side of the police as they came up, and when he saw that he was nearer the steps than any of the others he leaped away and started for the stairway. Dick caught the movement with his quick eye, though, and threw his gun to a level.

"Halt, Harris! Halt, I say!" and the fellow stopped on the instant. "Just come back this way. I'm very good with a revolver, you know, and it would tickle me to death to plant a piece of lead in you!"

It was more the coolness and daring of the language which Dick used that nettled the young fellow. It was bad enough to be trapped and taken prisoner by one boy, but to have him talk in that cool, calm, collected fashion was almost too much.

"Now, Thomas, will you kindly step over here in the light of this candle—how far it throws its beams! So shines a good deed in a naughty world. That's what my friend Shakespeare says about candles. You step over here by this one."

Dick had his weapon almost directly in young Harris' face, and his smile only meant that the young fellow was to move where the weapon directed.

"Chief, I will go through his pockets and see what I find."

Dick placed the weapon in his pocket and started toward Harris. At first the young fellow started back and raised a hand as if to strike, but Dick looked him squarely in the face and spoke to him:

"None of your monkey business, Harris, because I'm not going to stand for it. Get your hands in the air and I'll search you quietly."

Then he shoved a hand into the inside pocket of the young fellow and brought out a huge wallet. Placing this in his own pocket he quietly went through the other pockets, bringing out some loose change and a small roll of bills.

"That is sufficient for you. Now I think we shall see what our friend Travis possesses that we would like to have."

Turning his attention to the heavier man he dived a hand into the inner pocket of the coat and brought out another wallet.

"Wallets seem to be in fashion to-night," he muttered, smiling the while and diving another hand into another pocket. He brought up some more change and a small roll of bills from Travis' pockets.

"Now, chief, we ought to look in that little room and see what's there."

With these words the chief ordered the bracelets placed on the two men and he and Dick went into the small room where the candle burned. There was nothing of value there, and they started for the police station with the prisoners.

"Four o'clock in the morning and I haven't slept yet. Chief, would you send a note out to my mother at six o'clock and I'll sleep right here on your couch?" asked Dick when the prisoners were locked up and they were back in the main office of the station.

The chief agreed to this and Dick wrote a note to say that he was all right and would be home later in the morning.

It was late, and the sun was beaming through the window in all his morning glory when Dick's eyes opened to the world, and he rolled over to get his bearings. The room looked strange to him at first awakening, and he had to lay a moment and collect his thoughts. Then the whole situation flashed back to him and he remembered.

"Half an hour before court time and I've got to do some tall hurrying. I'd like to have this thing over with right away. Harris' trial is set for to-morrow, but the first hearing of these prisoners comes this morning, and if I can prove my case then that quashes the Harris case. So much, so good. A little water and a comb and brush will make me feel better."

Out of the chief's office Dick found his way to the general washing-room and cleaned himself, applying the clothes brush thoroughly and coming out of the place looking like an entirely different boy from the one who had retired so wearily in the chief's office a few hours before.

Using the telephone he brought Mr. Joseph Harris to the court-room in a short while, and now sent to the hospital for Delong. The doctor there announced that he was strong enough to appear in the court-room if necessity demanded, and Dick announced that necessity demanded.

The two prisoners were brought before the bar when court was called to order at the regular time, and the charges of disorderly conduct and resisting arrest were placed against them.

Dick hurried over to Charles Sherley, the prosecuting attorney, and asked that the charges be changed to abduction, assault and battery, and arson. He volunteered himself a witness in all the charges, and Sherley agreed.

Mr. Harris appeared at the court-room just as court was convened and looked in ghastly wonder at the presence of his nephew in the prisoner's dock.

"What does that mean, Mr. Dashington?" asked he.

"It means that your nephew has been acting bad," smiled Dick, and instantly he bethought himself of how much out of place such joking was at this time. "I am sorry to say, Mr. Harris, that Tom is charged with some very serious crimes, among them being the abduction of Evelyn. He is also charged with assault and battery on Delong, and I think they will prove the case."

These words almost carried the elder Harris from his feet. He could not understand. Dick explained what had happened, where the men had been found, and Evelyn, who had come with her father, thinking this was his trial, told them she was sure these were the men who had stolen her.

Tom Harris broke down after several questions had been

asked and confessed that he had been a gambler, that he had lost heavily, and then had been forced to borrow money from the very man to whom he lost, Travis. He then told how he had heard the quarrel and knew that Delong would bring money to the office late that afternoon. He said he did not mean to hit Delong so hard, but that in reaching across the table to hit him he slipped and threw his entire weight into the blow unintentionally. Then he grabbed the money and got away, tearing off the bands so that they would not be a clue against him. He sneaked out by the rear office door and came into the office with Travis when others had gone in there.

Then he said that he was afraid of Dick Dashington and that he had stolen Evelyn with the idea of making his uncle let loose of more money for her return. The firing of the building, he claimed, was not their fault, that it was burning when they started out and that they had to take the girl along with them.

Mr. Harris asked for the mercy of the court, since the money had almost all been returned, and Delong, who appeared in court and told a story which almost corroborated that of Tom Harris, adding that he and the elder Harris had not quarreled at all but had merely disagreed, also asked for the mercy of the court on the young fellow.

But Shamus Casey had measured the young fellow and his associate. Ten years was given to young Harris and eight to Travis for his doings.

"And, now, how can I repay you? Let us go up to your office and I'll pay you at once for your services," said Mr. Harris as they walked out of the court-room.

Dick announced his bill when they reached the office of the young lawyer, and Mr. Harris promptly produced a check-book and wrote out a check for the amount. It was five thousand dollars, as he had promised for Dick's success in winning the case.

"And how may I repay you?" asked Evelyn, as they were shaking hands at the door, and the elder Harris had hurried along to attend to some important business.

"I would like very much to call and see you once in a while," said Dick, a smile spreading over his face.

"Nothing would please me more, and I want to see you real soon—to-night, if you will?" she asked.

Dick pressed the hand a little more firmly and nodded as he said:

"To-night!" In time he married her, but that was after he had built up a large lucrative practice, which brought him both fame and fortune.

THE END.

Read "BROKER DEXTER'S NEW BOY; OR, A YOUNG INNOCENT IN WALL STREET," which will be the next number (178) of "Fame and Fortune Weekly."

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GOOD STORIES.

A startling discovery has just been made in Mammoth Cave, which is indisputably the effect of the drought which has prevailed over that section for ninety days. In some of the avenues where water from ten to fifteen feet deep stood, it is now perfectly dry. The effect is more noticeable on Echo River than any place. That famous stream, which normally can only be traversed for a short distance, owing to the water and the roof of the cave being so near each other, can now be traveled for miles, and it is claimed that the echoes, grand at all times, have been intensified thousands of times by the low water. Many of the avenues and inlets not known to have existed before have been discovered, and at the present water stage many miles of avenues and grottoes can be seen. While the water is low an effort will be made to locate the exit of Echo River.

A chemical company has devised a grenade, or glass receptacle, filled with a chemical compound, as a means of making it impossible for safe-blowers to rob a safe after breaking it open. It is an inoffensive-looking article, about two inches in diameter and five inches long. Inside of the exterior tube are seven smaller ones, each filled with a different chemical. When the door of the safe is blown, or the safe is jarred heavily, the grenade explodes and the air is filled with the deadly fumes. It is claimed that these fumes, which, so far as effect is concerned, are not unlike the gases from the deadly Chinese "stinkpots," are powerful enough to make breathing impossible, and to force all persons near the safe to retreat, or be almost instantly suffocated. The grenades are made with a lasting effect of from six to ten hours, depending upon the size, and are placed just back of the locking mechanism of the safe doors.

The corps of naturalists attached to the Zoological Park at Washington have recently concluded some interesting experiments to test the vision of certain animals. It appears that the sight of reptiles is generally very good, being probably their most acute sense, but not so acute as popularly supposed, possessing a limited range, indeed, as compared with most animals. Crocodiles cannot distinguish a man at distances exceeding ten times their length. Fish see for only short distances. The vision of most serpents is poor, the boa-constrictor, for example, being able to see no farther than one-third of its own length. Some snakes see no farther than one-eighth of their length. Frogs are better endowed with sight, for they can distinguish objects clearly at a distance of twenty times their own length. The hearing of nearly all

reptiles is even worse than their vision. Most of them are quite deaf, especially boa-constrictors. The phrase, "deaf as an adder," represents the careful observation of our forefathers.

Since you don't live in Siberia, you need not be afraid, says M. Narrion, a Russian, to get drunk through eating ordinary bread. A hardened toper would, on the other hand, think that Providence had played him a nasty trick in not allowing him first to see the light of day in Siberia. In Far Eastern Siberia, in that region which lies between the sea and the river called Mssuri, the humidity of the climate, as well as of the soil, is remarkable. Vegetation is here distinguished for its wonderful exuberance, to such an extent that the soil never dries up. The result is, that the inhabitants, in order to prevent putrefaction of the roots, sow their corn upon a series of layers of the soil. Nevertheless, in certain districts, the humidity is so intense that there grows upon the ears of corn a kind of fungous matter made up of microfungi. As a result of this sporadic excrescence, the bread made from the corn in question gives all the results of an overdose of alcohol. In very humid climates the phenomenon is likewise known, though to nothing like the extent in Eastern Siberia, where whole districts are affected by this strange kind of "alcoholized bread."

JOKES AND JESTS.

Captious Customer—I want a piece of meat without any bone, fat or gristle. Bewildered Butcher—Madam, I think you'd better have an egg.

Pat—I hear yer woife is sick, Moike. Mike—She is thot. Pat—Is it dangerous she is? Mike—Divil a bit. She's too weak to be dangerous any more.

Miss Bridge Fiend—Oh, Mr. Frost, I'm afraid you've been playing cards for money. Mr. Frost—How do you know? Miss Bridge Fiend—Your game has improved so.

"What's the matter, old man?" "I was out rather late last night, where a lot of my friends repeatedly sang that I was a jolly good fellow." "Weren't you?" "I guess I was, all right, but I can't get my wife to believe it."

The bridegroom relaxed for a moment his arm's tense pressure. "What would you do," he whispered hoarsely, "if, by some terrible accident, I should be drowned?" In the mild moonlight he saw his young wife pale and shudder. "Oh, don't, Tom!" she cried. "How can you? You know I don't look well in black!"

The smoker who sat directly opposite had put his foot on the edge of the seat occupied by the professor. It was encased in one of those easy-going hygienic shoes that look like a canvas-covered ham. "My friend," said the professor, eying it disapprovingly, "oblige me by removing that thing from my seat. It's bad form."

A policeman saw a man acting rather suspiciously near a jeweler's one evening, and going over to him he demanded to know who the man was and what he wanted. "I'm thinking of opening a jeweler's shop in this neighborhood," replied the man, "and I'm watching to see if there is much trade." Whereupon the policeman went on his way satisfied. Next morning word was received at the station that the shop had been entered and robbed during the night. The policeman who had accosted the mysterious stranger said reflectively: "He may be a thafe, but he's no liar!"

A Hopeless Case

By Horace Appleton.

I don't wish my readers to think that I am self-conceited or egotistical, for I only state a plain fact when I say that during my active years on the detective force, there never came in a very difficult case, or a case which everybody else had given up, that I wasn't at once put on it.

Few detectives like to take up a case which has been worked on before, or in which the lapse of time has allowed of the loss of clues which might easily have been found in the beginning.

One of the worst of all cases came into my hands in this wise:

I had just brought to a successful issue the chase after a forger, and entered the office after an absence of over two months. I saw that the chief was troubled, but he no sooner saw me than his face brightened.

"Just the man I want," he said. "Clark, here is 'A Hopeless Case' for you to work up."

"What's the good of my wasting my time on it if it is hopeless?"

"We've got to appear to do something," he said, desperately. "The newspapers are going for us bald-headed. Here is a murder committed six weeks ago, and not a clue of the faintest kind. I have had seven men on it, and they've all given up beat. Don't talk back and try to reason with me—for you must take it."

Well, I was under orders. What could I do? Only quietly bridle my disgust and go to work.

I was soon in possession of all that was known. Henry Salsbury had been found dead in his bed one morning, his head having been crushed by a pair of heavy iron tongs, used for a wood fire in the grate in his bedroom.

Robbery had not been the motive, so far as could be seen, for nothing had been taken that was known of. Henry Salsbury was wealthy, fifty years of age, and a bachelor. And that was all there was to tell me.

At once going to work, determined to do the best I could, I inquired about his family and learned that he had two brothers, Arthur and Edward.

Arthur, like himself, was a bachelor, of forty-five or six, and by the terms of Henry Salsbury's will, was made sole legatee of his wealth.

"Ha!" I thought, "here is a motive, or at least a possible one."

But why was Edward, younger and a married man, left out in the cold? Had Henry and Edward been on bad terms? If so, here was another motive.

I inquired into the matter, and from authentic sources learned that to all outward appearances, Henry and Edward were friends. But not leaving him anything! How was it to be explained?

"I can tell you," said a person who knew them well, of whom I inquired. "Henry met and loved a beautiful girl, much younger than himself. She liked him, although I don't believe she loved him, but he thought she did."

"He introduced his brothers to her as his intended wife. Edward was captivated, she learned to love him, and they were married."

"Henry upbraided Edward for his lack of honor in winning her away from him. But the outside world never knew of his resentment, and they were, to all appearances, friends,

although it has ever since been an understood thing that Edward would never handle a dollar of his brother's money."

This, then, disposed of any suspicion of Edward. If he had known what the will would be, he would never have committed the murder. However, I was satisfied that it had been done by somebody who would benefit by his death.

"How about Arthur?" I asked.

"He has known for years that he was his brother's heir."

"Then he must be the man," I thought.

I hunted up every scrap of information possible which concerned him, and on learning that he had been a little "fast," as it is termed, I was convinced that I had a hold on the right man. But how to prove it? There was the rub.

Arthur now occupied the house where the murder had been committed. I visited it, told him who I was, and requested permission to examine the room where the murder had been done.

I was staggered by the readiness with which he acquiesced, and the earnestness of his tone in wishing that I might be successful in unearthing the murderer. I examined the room to my heart's content—it had not been changed since the murder, Arthur said—and then I began to glance about at the walls, the pictures, the articles of *vertu*, anything, everything, was scrutinized.

At one side of the room adjoining, into which I went, was a desk.

"This belonged to your brother?" I said, seating myself before it in the stuffed chair.

"It did."

"Has it been overhauled?"

"I have touched nothing, in the hope that by leaving things as they were found, some possible clue might be the result," he answered. "Even the waste-paper basket has not been emptied."

I glanced at the basket, then stooped and pick up a crumpled bit of paper and straightened it out—

A letter from a man begging for charity.

I opened another—

Didn't he want to buy a country seat?

I smoothed out another, still—

A broker advised him to purchase Erie.

"I'll be back presently," said Arthur Salsbury, as I picked up another.

Becoming absorbed in my work, I did not notice his absence; it was lucky he was absent, for finally I gave a start, and uttered a cry of joy. I held in my hand a letter, evidently commenced by Henry Salsbury on the morning of the day he had been murdered.

"Sir: Time was when I at least believed you honest, though I have good reason, God knows, to doubt your honor. *Dishonest!* You dishonest! It breaks my heart!"

"And how are you going to save yourself? By getting help from the hand you have stung like a poisonous adder. I see there is no other way, so come to me at ten to-night—"

That was all of the letter to be found, and this was in three pieces; evidently Henry Salsbury had got thus far, and being dissatisfied with what he had written, had torn the paper, and commenced the letter anew.

Who was the man he asked to come at ten o'clock that night? And in what way had he been dishonest?

Other scraps of Henry's writing had been found, and these I distributed among the letters just as I heard a foot ascending the stairs.

As the person entered the room, I glanced up. From the family resemblance I knew I saw before me Edward Salsbury.

He started at sight of me, and muttered that the servant had said he would find his brother here.

"He will be back in a minute," I said. "I am a new detective in this case. Would you have any objection, sir, to saying if you recognize in that pile of papers any of your brother's writing?"

One hand was behind him holding a cane, the other held his high hat, the rim of which he nearly crushed as I asked the question. I shall never forget the piercing expression of his eyes as he fastened them on me, and said:

"Sir, though a detective, you're a fool!"

"Granted!" I coolly replied. "But by means of such recognition of your brother's handwriting, I shall find the murderer!"

I fancied he paled a little, that he appeared to choke, but then he said:

"In that case I'll only be too happy to do as you desire;" and turning over the papers, he rapidly said: "This was written by him—and this—and this."

"Thank you," I said. Yes, the barest shadow of doubt was removed. The upbraiding letter I had concealed was penned by the same hand which he had declared was his brother's.

It was a relief to both, I think, when Arthur entered the room.

"Have you discovered anything?"

"Yes. I have a clue in my possession at last, a clue which the other detectives might easily have found had they taken the trouble."

"What is it?"

"A specimen of your dead brother's penmanship."

"How can that be a clue?"

"Peace! Patience! Time will tell."

I left the house. Again my feelings had undergone a revolution. I had entered, suspecting Arthur, convinced that Edward was innocent; I left convinced of Arthur's innocence, and of the guilt of Edward, or some intimate and long-trusted friend of the murdered man.

But why should Edward desire Henry's death, since he would not be benefited?

But—somebody was upbraided with dishonesty; that somebody probably visited Henry Salsbury that night, and murdered him to conceal his dishonesty. Thus I was convinced. I inquired about Edward. He had been rich, but had lost heavily in speculating in Wall Street. But for some time prior to the murder, he had appeared to have plenty of money, and yet he had not made a strike. There was something under this. But what? How could Edward act dishonestly towards his brother?

I found out what bank Henry Salsbury had kept his account in, and lounging here in disguise one day, I saw Arthur Salsbury enter.

"I received a notice from you in regard to a note," he said to the bank official.

"Yes; another one has just been presented."

"Can I see it?"

"Yes."

I saw Arthur scan it closely, particularly the signature.

"Is it all right?" was asked.

"Yes; I cannot gainsay that signature," he answered. "But it is singular that with so much money lying idle, he should have put out so many notes."

When Arthur had gone, I asked to see the note, and putting the signature of that and several checks under a magnifying glass, I became convinced that the note was a forgery!

I traced it back, and found that it had been placed in a note broker's hands by Edward Salsbury.

It was nearly dark. I was agitated by my good fortune

and the discovery I had made. I went home to refresh myself, and rest a little.

About nine o'clock I went to Edward Salsbury's house. I was within a few doors of it when I saw a carriage drive up. Salsbury's door opened, and a man, a stranger to me, descended the steps. A stranger, I said. At first he was so, but his size, his walk, betrayed him.

It was Edward Salsbury, and he was about to flee the city.

I sprang forward, clapped my hand on his shoulder, and demanded his surrender.

"What for?" he asked.

"For the murder of your brother," I sternly said.

He grew ghastly pale, and for one minute trembled like an aspen. Then desperation gave him courage and strength.

"My hand is stained, and one murder more or less will make no difference," he hissed, and ere I could prevent it, had snatched out a revolver and clapped it to my head.

I have been called a lion on account of my bravery, but God knows I trembled then, for I thought my time had come.

I would have been a dead man in another second had not the driver leaned forward and struck the murderous hand a blow with the heavy butt of his whip.

It knocked the weapon from his hand. He was at my mercy, I thought.

But no, not quite. He was a larger and more powerful man than I, and in a moment he had me by the throat. We fell together to the walk, and with his fast-coming breath hissing between his clenched teeth, his eyes flaming, he began to rapidly lift and alternately bang my head against the flagging.

"Curse you!" he hissed, vindictively. "But for you it would have been all right. It was a hopeless case, they said, before you put your nose into it. Curse you, I say! They may hang me some day, but it'll be for two murders, and not for one."

I felt that I was losing consciousness, and knew if I did, that he would escape me. I determined to make one supreme effort, and I did. What it was I don't know to this day, so excited was I. But I raised him off me, flung him from me, and when I was able to see, saw that I had had the good fortune to so throw him that his head had struck the edge of a step and stunned him.

Before he regained sense enough to know what was transpiring, I had the "bracelets" on him, and assisted by the driver, had him in "limbo" half an hour later.

He was afterwards tried, convicted and sentenced to be hung, but found means somehow of committing suicide in his cell. Having been pressed greatly, he confessed his guilt.

He had been unfortunate in Wall Street. In a moment of desperation, he had forged his brother's name to a note, hoping to be able to take care of it when it came due, and without his brother's knowledge. This had been an impossibility.

The forgery was so perfect that the bank paid the note when presented, paid others also, and it was not until they reached Henry Salisbury's hands that the forgery was known to anyone.

At once he guessed Edward to be the guilty party; and had written to him angrily. The letter half finished, he had torn it up, preferring to wait until the meeting to upbraid him.

At ten o'clock Henry had let Edward in, unknown to the servants. An angry conversation had followed, the upshot of which was the murder, Henry declaring his intention of publishing his brother's crime to the world.

And for my conducting of this case I gained many laurels.

In fact, it ended in my getting a *sobriquet*, which clung to me a long time. It was:

"The Hero of a Hopeless Case."

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